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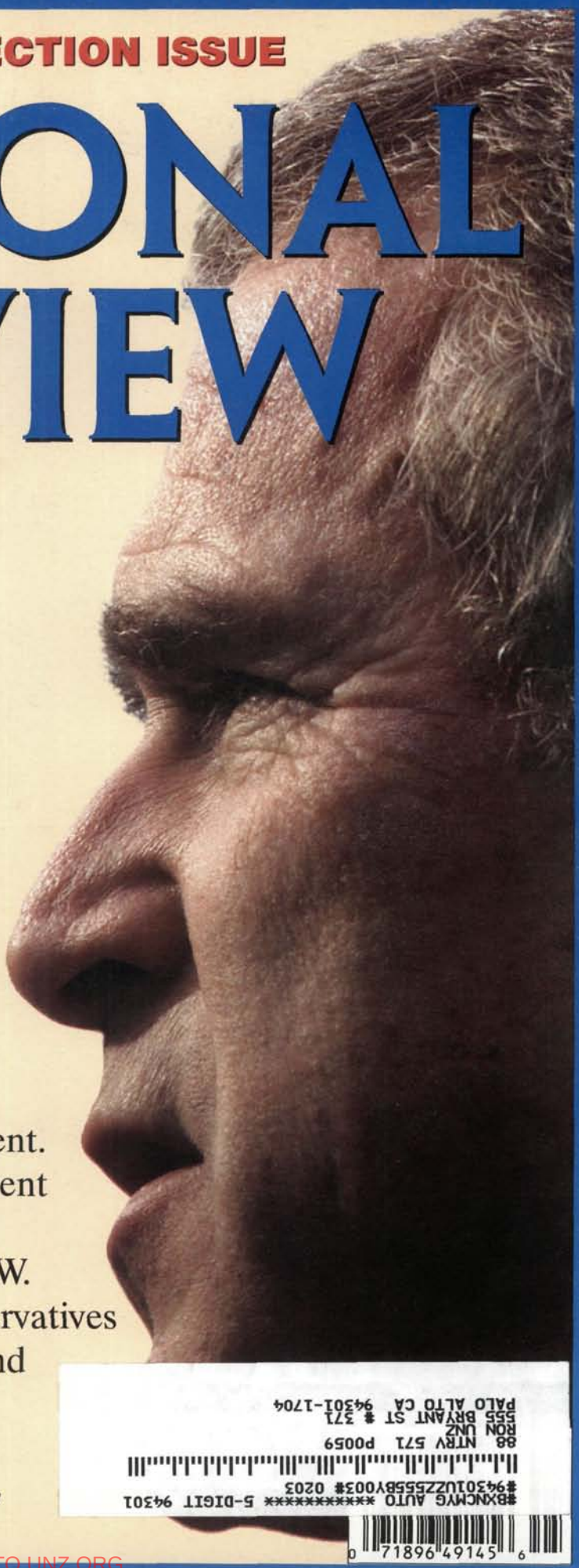
THE BLOODY MIDDLE EAST — The Editors

SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE

NATIONAL REVIEW



The editors of National Review will vote, on Tuesday, November 7, for George W. Bush for president, and we urge the faithful to do the same. The (very) late Bishop Butler, acknowledging a protest against Christian canon, said three hundred years ago that, to be sure, if he had been God, he'd have made things a little bit different. If the editors of NR had been present at the creation, we'd have struck a finer tuning fork to guide George W. But the choice is as it is, and conservatives need to abide by what was a fair and open process that concluded this political season with a significant national choice. . . .

continued on page 8

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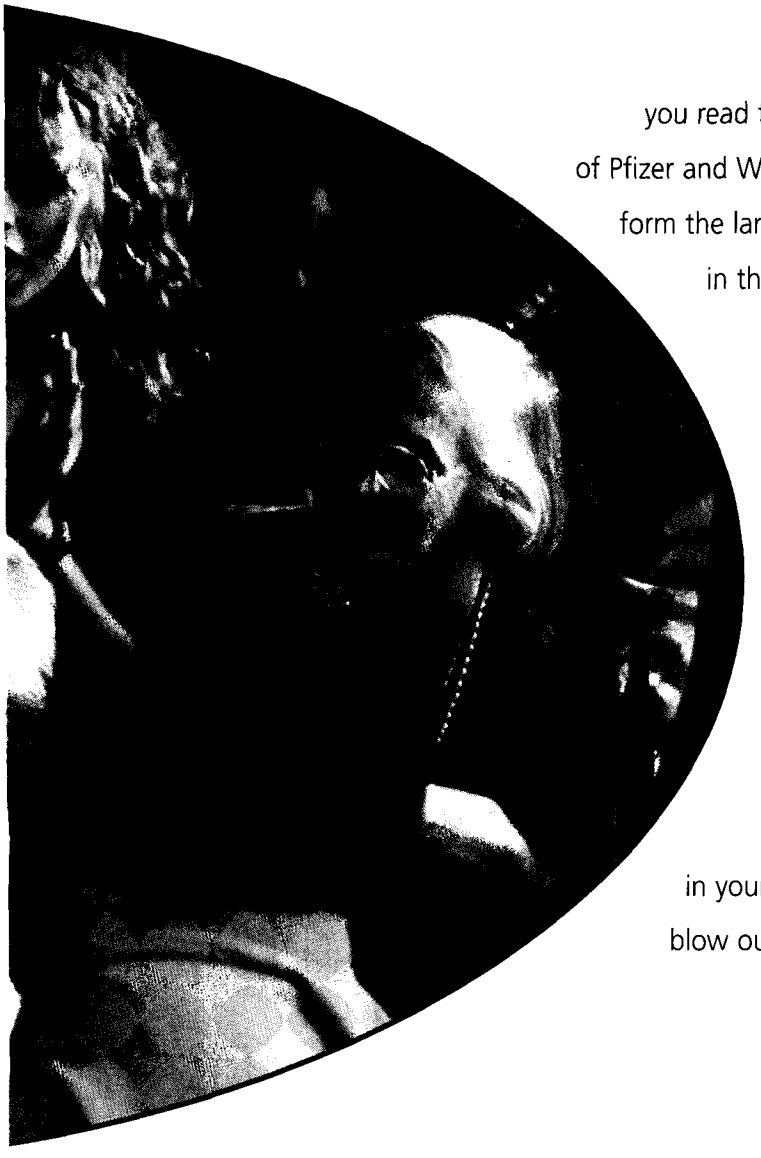

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ LETTERS ■

THE GIRL SCOUTS TODAY

Your recent article "The Cookie Crumbles" (by Kathryn Jean Lopez, Oct. 23) unfortunately does not paint a complete and accurate picture of today's Girl Scout organization. The author's portrayal overlooks many important facts, including the basic tenet of our mission—"to inspire girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service."

For nearly 90 years, Girl Scouting has played a vital role in helping more than 50 million American women learn leadership skills based on the self-confidence, self-respect, and self-worth nurtured by their Girl Scout experiences. Women like former First Ladies Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush are just a few of the women who benefited from Girl Scouting.

Contemporary Girl Scouting does provide a wide range of learning opportunities for girls, encompassing activities designed to help them grow strong in body, mind, and spirit. We are proud of our program, and proud of our long history of inclusiveness. We remain committed to understanding the needs of girls and to providing results of our research and other insights to parents and other adults who work with girls.

It is unfortunate that many of the "conclusions" in the article are based more on opinion than on fact. While that is certainly your right as a publisher, we must take you to task on at least one inaccuracy. Ms. Evans was not the "mother" of the 12-12-5 affirmative-action policy, but was proud to help the U.S. Navy become more inclusive of all Americans.

We at Girl Scouts of the USA hope your readers will take the time to become fully informed about our organization and to consider volunteering to serve as adult mentors to today's girls as they become tomorrow's leaders.

Lori A. Arguelles
Director of Communications
Girl Scouts of America
New York, N.Y.

KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ RESPONDS: *An inaccuracy? Clearly, since Marty Evans was not the Secretary of the Navy, but the director of recruitment, she could not have unilaterally invented or implemented the Navy's quota policy. But RADM Evans did, in fact, nurture and protect the policy, calling it, in the February 1995 issue of* Navy Recruiter, *her "top priority."*

I have just read "The Cookie Crumbles" and applaud you for your accurate portrayal of what was once a venerable institution, the Girl Scouts. As a former Girl Scout member, leader, and recruiter, I have seen the organization leave its Judeo-Christian foundation to become a group actively promoting a liberal agenda.

As a result of our love for Scouting and GSUSA's inability to allow a conservative voice in their "agenda," a group of moms in Cincinnati, Ohio, have started an alternative to the Girl Scouts, the American Heritage Girls. We have been in existence since 1995 and offer a full program of merit badges, service projects, camping experiences, and leadership opportunities to over 1,000 girls in the Cincinnati area. We also have troops in other states, including California. We are excited about our ability to offer what the Girl Scouts used to be about, building character within our nation's youth.

Patti Garibay
Executive Director
American Heritage Girls, Inc.
Cincinnati, Ohio

AN ENVIRONMENTAL WITNESS

Your Election Guide (Oct. 23) correctly recommends that candidates raise questions about the prospects of a future that includes the Kyoto global-warming accords. Hundreds of America's most influential religious leaders, including Dr. James Dobson, Chuck Colson, and Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, did just that earlier in the year with the release of the Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship. This declaration called into question the scientific merits of the global-warming hypothesis and warned that public policies to combat "exaggerated risks" can "dangerously delay or reverse the economic development necessary to improve not only human life but also human stewardship of the environment." Political leaders would be wise to follow the lead of the religious community in putting the interests of the poor and working families ahead of politicized science.

Michael B. Barkey
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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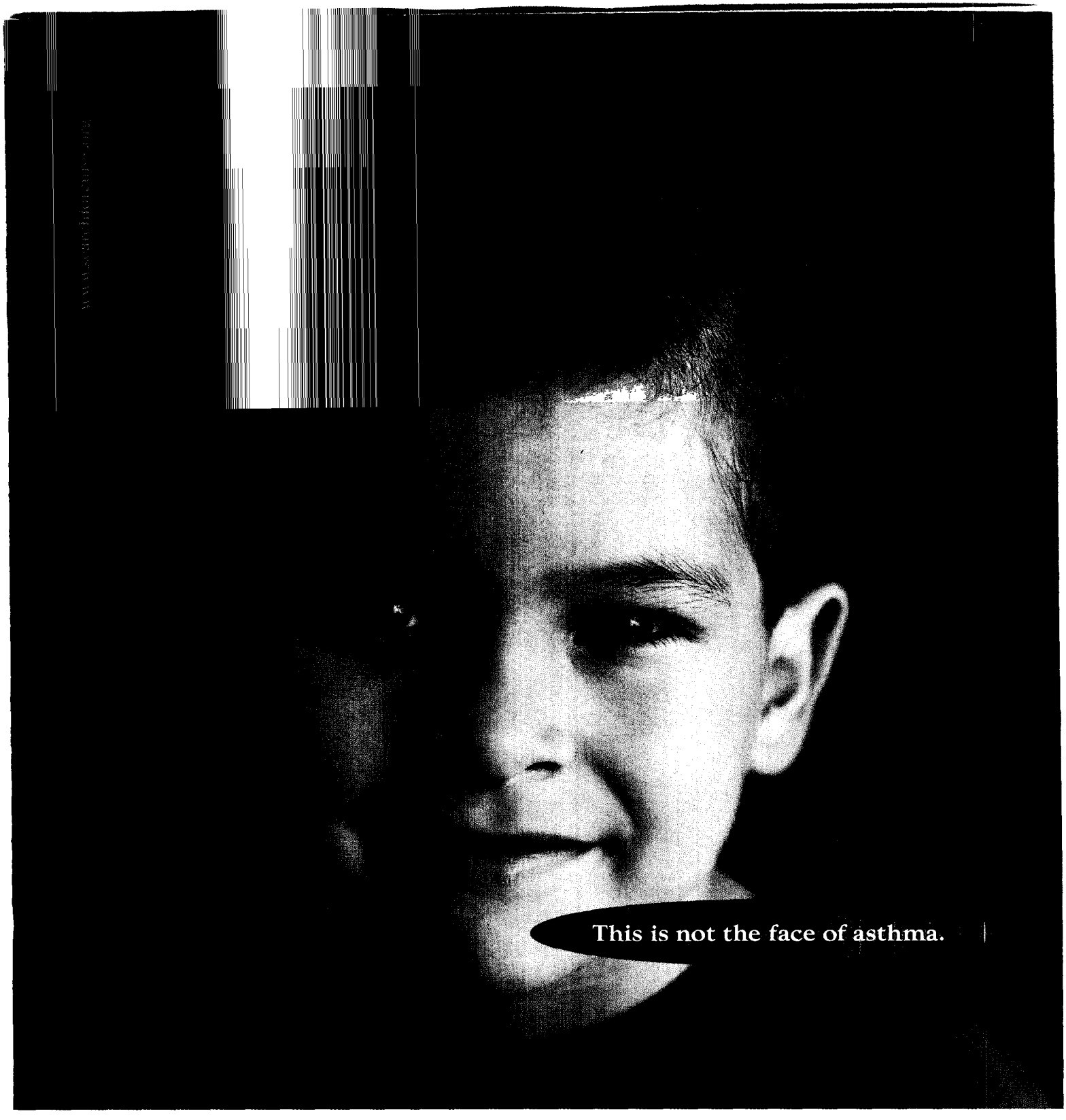

It's the face of Jeremy Gutierrez — skateboarder, bike rider, rollerblader, kid. It wasn't always that way. Like five million other children with asthma, Jeremy was forced to live an overly protected life due to fear of attacks. And when attacks did come, they often meant being rushed away from friends and family into the fear and trauma of the emergency room. Today, America's pharmaceutical companies are discovering medicines that help kids like Jeremy stay healthy, stay in school, and stay out of hospitals. Pharmaceutical company researchers are working hard to discover breakthroughs that will help make many illnesses and diseases a thing of the past and bring more patients new hope for a better tomorrow. Thanks to new medicines discovered by these researchers, today, Jeremy has a life like any normal six-year-old — a life full of curiosity, full of wonder and full of health.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

Leading the way in the search for cures

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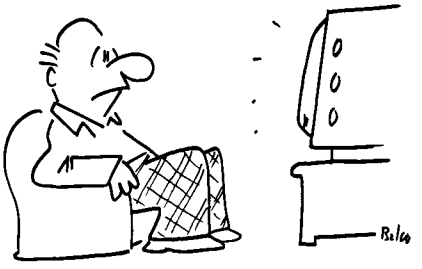
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ *The Hotline*'s review of state polls shows **Al Gore** leading in 23 states worth 281 electoral votes and **Bush** ahead in 26 states worth 227 (270 needed to win). . . . Florida remains closer than Bush campaign expected or wanted. . . . Gore considers abandoning efforts in Louisiana and Ohio, reports *New York Times*. . . . *Congressional Quarterly* lists 15 House races, five Senate races, and five gubernatorial races with "no clear favorite." . . . Bush, on Gore: "If you look at the real numbers, you'll find that he wants to grow the size of the federal government three times bigger than the size that was proposed by President **Bill Clinton**. His proposals are larger than the proposals of **Walter Mondale** and **Michael Dukakis**—combined."

■ Gore, on "misstatements," in *Washington Post*: "I don't want to get into each and every one of those. . . . These are negative personal attacks of the kind I simply do not engage in." . . . Gore spokesman **Mark Fabiani**: "We've never attacked Bush for his numerous crimes against the English language." . . . More Fabiani: "Gov. Bush seems incapable of talking about the important issues in this campaign in a coherent way. The American people deserve to hear him explain his policies and address the issues without bumbling and babbling." . . . Gore press secretary **Marla Romash**, on Gore's truth-telling problems: "Sometimes I think it is a storyteller's flair." . . . Gore, on his "exaggerations," on Fox News Channel: "I take responsibility for getting some of the details wrong." . . . In ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, 61 percent believe Gore "will say anything to win." . . . California Democratic party chairman **Art Torres**, asked to explain Gore "misstatements," in *New York Times*: "I'm not a psychiatrist." . . . Gore, on whether the Oval Office should have a 24-hour web cam: "Maybe so." . . . **Bob Dole**, on Gore's claiming he didn't know visit to Buddhist temple was fundraiser, on WBBR radio: "When I go into a place and people are writing checks . . . I think it's probably a fundraiser."

■ *Saturday Night Live* mocks Gore debating style: "Jim, I'd like to interrupt here and answer that question as if it were my turn to speak. Jim, let me tell you about a friend of mine. Her name is Etta Munson. She is 94. She's a widow living on Social Security in Sparta, Tennessee. Etta was born with only one kidney. She also suffers from polio, spinal meningitis, lung, liver, and pancreatic cancer, an enlarged heart, diabetes, and a rare form of cystic acne. Now, several recent strokes, along with an unfortunate shark attack, have left her paralyzed and missing her right leg under the knee. Just last week, she awoke from a coma to find that due to a hospital mix-up, her left arm was amputated, infected with syphilis, and then reattached. As you can imagine, Jim, Etta's prescription-drug bills are staggering."



"This has been a test of our Emergency Disaster Broadcast Warning System. We now return to Happy Days . . ."

■ Clinton, on taking mulligans, in *Golf Digest*: "You'd be surprised at how many times you don't get a bit of good out of it." . . . Clinton, in *The New Yorker*: "I still believe that two of the great achievements of my administration were facing down the government shutdowns in '95 and '96, and then facing [impeachment]." . . . More Clinton: "I don't think the new president, whoever he is, will have problems with me acting like I wished I were still president." . . . What Clinton said to treasury secretary **Robert Rubin** in wake of Oklahoma City bombing, according to *The New Yorker*: "I will never again use the word 'bureaucrat' publicly. . . . It only plays on the resentments people feel about government." . . . **Hillary Clinton**, in *Newsday*: "Contributing to the Democratic party is a contribution to the country."

■ **Douglas Urbanski**, manager for actor **Gary Oldman**, on last-minute editing cuts made to political movie *The Contender*, in *Premiere*: "If your names are **Spielberg**, **Katzenberg**, and **Geffen** . . . you can't have a film with a Republican character . . . who is at all sympathetic." . . . *Rosie O'Donnell Show* spokeswoman **Laura Mandel**, on why Hillary Clinton has made appearances on program but **Rick Lazio** hasn't been invited, in New York *Daily News*: "We're not inviting candidates on. . . . We invited her on as the First Lady." . . . ABC's **Diane Sawyer** to Fox talk-show host **Bill O'Reilly**: "Should you be using the national airwaves to promote your opinions?" . . . In Close Up Foundation poll, one-third of 16- to 21-year-olds can't name presidential candidates, and more than three-quarters can't name running mates. . . . **David Murray** of Statistical Assessment Service, on polling, in *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*: "We have an army of people running over the body politic and sticking thermometers into every orifice they can find." . . . Gov. **Jeb Bush** (R., Fla.), on whether he would accept post if brother is elected president, in *St. Petersburg Times*: "Absolutely not. . . . That's nepotism." . . . Supreme Court upholds decision saying District of Columbia isn't entitled to voting member of Congress. . . . Author **Paul Ehrlich**, in *New York Times*: "I was naïve when I wrote *The Population Bomb*."

■ **Boris Yeltsin**, in Russian-TV interview, says intelligence sources informed him of **Monica Lewinsky** scandal before it became public, but he didn't warn Clinton because "I thought Clinton could handle it himself." . . . Zimbabwe president **Robert Mugabe** pardons thousands of offenders who participated in election violence leaving 32 dead and 10,000 homeless. . . . Ghana hopes to boost tourism by black Americans interested in history of slave trade. . . . Greek warplanes visit airbase in Turkey for first time in 30 years, marking a thaw in rival countries' relations.

■ *Glamour* magazine endorses Gore. Did his debate make-up job impress the editors? **NR**

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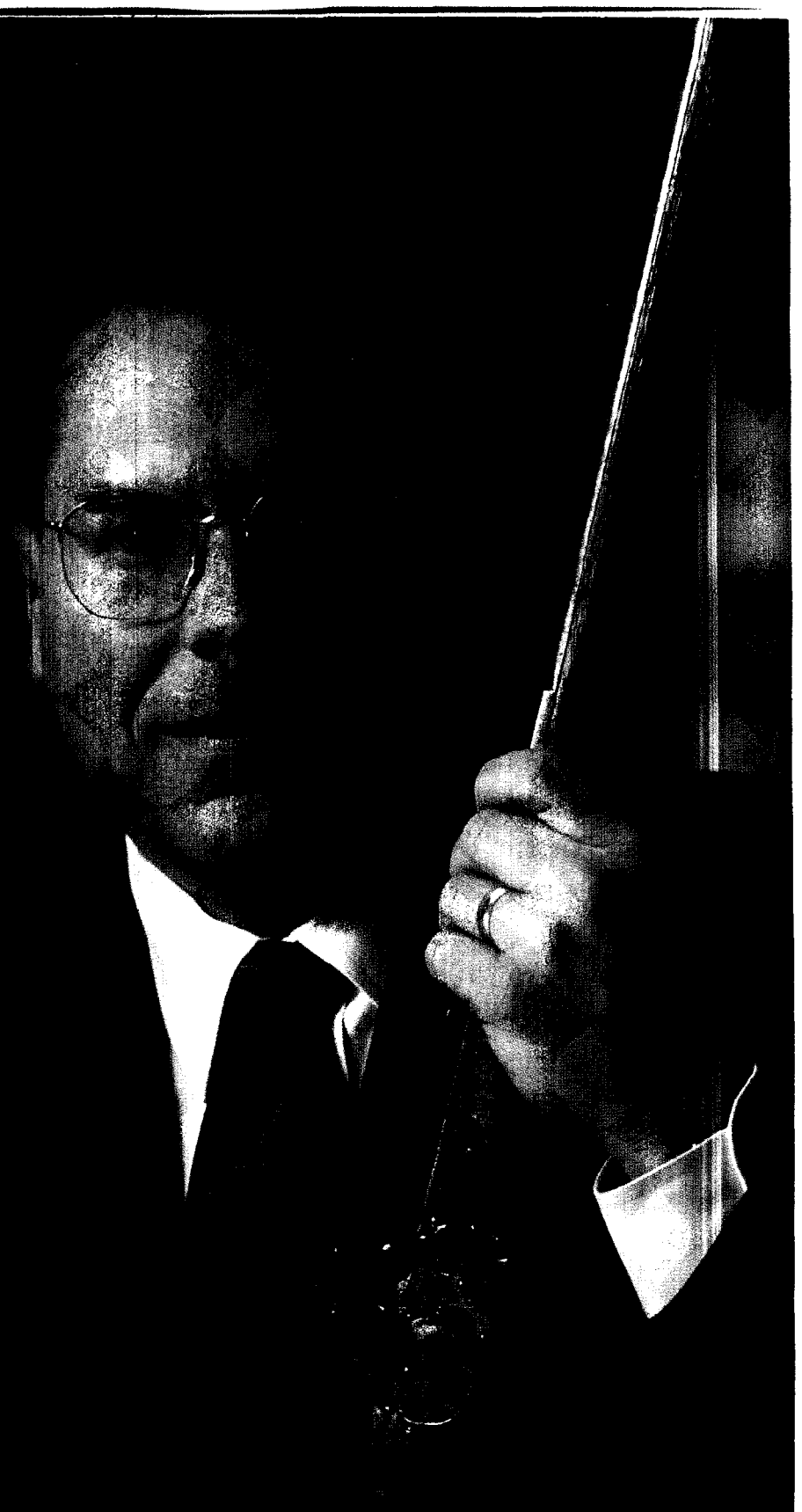
This gun came to America on the Mayflower. The right to own it didn't. That right came with the blood and bravery of countless patriots, whose valor now bestows it at birth upon every U.S. citizen. The National Firearms Museum outside Washington, D.C. is indeed a world-class collection of guns. But it's also the history of man's rise to freedom from oppression, and the sweet victory of liberty over tyranny. I encourage you to participate in the majesty of that never-ending story ... as a member of the NRA. **I'm The NRA.**



Wayne LaPierre
Chief Executive Officer
National Rifle Association of America

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Did You Know ... "With more than 2,000 guns from the 14th century to the present on display, the National Firearms Museum near Washington, D.C. tells the story of human freedom and the American experience through compelling exhibits. Make it a rewarding and educational stop on your next visit to the nation's Capitol."

Charlton Heston, NRA President

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THE WEEK

continued from cover

. . . Vice President Gore is a demagogue who curries envy and fashions policy to the end of promoting central government as agent of health, prosperity, and education. His policies, on deliberation, distill, then curdle. The call now is for a rejection of self-infatuated exhibitionism, in favor of a more modest statesman, aware of his own limitations and those of aggrandized government. We hope that November 7 will end the reign of Clinton/Gore, and bring on a better, cleaner politics under George W. Bush.

—ED.

■ Louis Farrakhan, seeking to move to the mainstream, cosponsored a rally in Washington, D.C., with the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Looks like he still has a way to go.

■ In the debates, George W. Bush assured the public of his competence and began to appeal to its latent conservatism—in particular, its fear of an overweening state. Al Gore has failed to make the case that he has had much to do with their present happy state, that he would continue it, or that Bush would end it. The public senses, as well, that Gore is not temperamentally suited for the presidency. His tone toward his countrymen veers between messianism and unctuous flattery without ever touching down on respect. Bush enters the final phase of the campaign holding the upper hand.

■ Are George W. Bush's criticisms of Al Gore's fondness for big government having any effect? Gore sure seems to think so. He has long boasted that he and Clinton have reduced the federal workforce to the size of the Kennedy administration (which is true, if soldiers are counted as employees and federal contractors aren't). More recently, he has been claiming that he would shrink the government further as president: By paying down the debt, he would reduce interest payments and thus total federal spending. And he has even argued that it is Bush who would "expand the role of the federal government." The claim is risible, and Gore has hardly bothered to back it up. But his having made it is a tribute to the continuing vitality of antistatism in America.

■ Gore is condemning Bush for not seeing to it that Texans, especially Texan children, have health insurance. It's true that Texans are more likely to lack insurance than people in most other states. They are also more likely to be from Mexico. A recent study by the Center for Immigration Studies found that immigration accounted for more than half of the increase in the number of uninsured Americans between 1994 and 1998. Gore's latest evidence against Bush is particularly suspect: He notes ominously that Medicaid enrollments are falling in Texas even as they are rising nationally. But it is not clear how many people are leaving Medicaid because they have gotten a job (or a higher-paying job) and private health insurance. Unless having more people on the dole is an end in itself, the Texas figures are unimportant. Finally, Gov. Bush tried to expand Medicaid by lifting some federal regulations. The Clinton administration blocked his plan—at the behest of one Al Gore. Gore's attack on Bush combines misleading claims, liberal myopia, and a touch of hypocrisy. It is, in short, vintage Gore.

■ Bush and Dick Cheney flubbed the questions about moral issues during the debates. On RU-486, Bush sowed confusion about his position. As near as we can tell, he is saying that he would not, and could not, stack the FDA to get it to undo its approval of the abortion drug. But he has not ruled out signing a bill to ban RU-486 should it reach his desk. Cheney, responding to a question about homosexuality, made the ambiguous statement that "we ought to do everything we can to tolerate and accommodate whatever kind of relationships people want to enter into." Whether to give homosexual relationships legal recognition, he also suggested, was a matter for states to decide for themselves. This federalist position, whatever its theoretical merits, is untenable. The sort of judicial activism that foisted same-sex unions on Vermont cannot be confined to one state. We are not inclined to sound a general alarm about the candidates' comments: Cheney wasn't speaking for Bush, and neither was the tongue-tied Bush. But it would be nice if, once in a while, Republicans would display a coherent conservatism on moral issues.

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g Hig ech Industries

Something odd is happening in the market for highly educated workers. At a time when business executives are complaining about a shortage of highly skilled workers and agitating for increased immigration, university professors are fretting about a glut of Ph.D.'s.

To understand this apparent paradox, you have to recognize that being a university professor and working for a private business firm are different kinds of jobs, requiring different kinds of educational preparation. A Ph.D. in chemistry prepares a student well for teaching and research in the university. A master's degree in chemical engineering will typically be more useful (and will certainly take less time) for someone who wants to develop innovative production processes in the private sector.

In recent decades, **science and technology policy in the United States has emphasized Ph.D. training for future professors and neglected other kinds of training** for people who will go to work in the private sector, but this was not always the case. The Morrill Act of 1862 used grants of land to the states to fund new universities that would teach young people the "agricultural and mechanic arts." These A&M schools trained students for practical problem-solving in our armories, hospitals, factories, and farms.

After WWII, government policy shifted dramatically. The new focus was to support the research done by university professors and to produce Ph.D. recipients who will become the next generation of professors. This made sense at a time when our university system was expanding rapidly. But in recent decades the **growth in new positions for professors has slowed even as the number of graduate students has continued to grow.** New Ph.D. recipients now find few full-time faculty jobs available. Undergraduate students naturally avoid what they see as dead-end careers in science.

We need to move back in the direction of our pre-WWII system and provide more support for the people who will drive innovation in the private sector. This will require that more of our undergraduate students receive degrees in science or engineering. It will also require new types of graduate programs, ones that differ from traditional Ph.D. programs just as the chemical engineering degree differs from a Ph.D. in chemistry. These new programs could be created in promising areas such as software development, network design, information security, and bio-informatics (or genomics). The new programs could give students cutting-edge knowledge yet prepare them for rewarding careers outside the university. If we create these programs and raise the number and ability of the students who enroll in existing programs, such as chemical and electrical engineering, we can sustain our leading position in high-tech industries. Moreover, we can do so without getting stuck in the dangerous and divisive position of having to import the people who actually develop the new technologies that drive economic growth.

— Paul M. Romer

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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He said to me,

"If you walk

out that door,

I'll kill you."

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HELPING END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If you've ever wondered why abused women don't just leave, ask Dee.

Beyond the emotional abuse, beatings and stalking, she lived in fear that her boyfriend would hurt her children if she tried to escape. Finally, Dee found SAFEHOME, a program for victims of domestic violence in Johnson County, Kansas that gave her shelter, food and counseling — and the courage to begin a better life.

As a successful career woman and mother of three, Dee knows firsthand that domestic abuse is not the problem of "other" people. It affects millions of women, men and children in every community, regardless of race or income. The time to stop the violence is now.

That's why we established *The Philip Morris Campaign Against Domestic Violence.* Our support of SAFEHOME and similar organizations nationwide is just one of the ways we've been making a difference to communities in need for more than forty years.

What would you do?

If you or someone you know needs help, contact:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
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■ Racial profiling has become the most notorious police technique since Bull Connor's German shepherds. Presidential candidates condemn it; police departments caught doing it must publicly atone. Racial profiling undermines respect for the law among blacks who become the targets of police interest, no matter how blamelessly they behave. For officers of the law, however, it is only applied sociology. In principle, racial profiling is race-blind: Whites driving through black neighborhoods are routinely stopped on the assumption that they are buying drugs. The problem is that there are more categories of crime for which blacks are likely suspects. As long as that is the case, racial profiling will continue—whether or not it is disavowed.

■ Confounding the hopes of conservatives nationally, Rick Lazio has been running one of the weakest campaigns in the nation. Lazio seized on soft money as an issue—an issue about which nobody who is not professionally engaged in politics cares. The Long Island congressman has largely ignored upstate New York, where Hillary Clinton has been running determinedly. Lazio expects New Yorkers to vote for him because he is not Mrs. Clinton and is a pleasant fellow; in essence, he has tried to run a negative campaign nicely. Turmoil in the Middle East might yet save him; a real issue—any issue: taxes, school vouchers, Social Security, partial-birth abortion—would help. But on present trends, Mrs. Clinton's 2004 campaign will begin Wednesday, November 8.

■ Just three years ago, Congress committed itself to spending no more than $541 billion (excluding entitlements) in 2001. Now Congress is adjourning—so that Republicans can campaign full-time back home as fiscal conservatives—after breaking that limit by almost $100 billion. The slippage started earlier this year, when Congress adopted a $600 billion budget. President Clinton requested $624 billion. Republicans, still haunted by the government shutdown in 1995, gave him (or rather, his successor) over $630 billion. But their surrender to Clinton is less consequential than their long-ago surrender to a budget-writing process that was designed by Democrats to facilitate the growth of the federal government. The budget rules generally require tax cuts to be financed through cuts in entitlements. Since it's hard to cut entitlements, it's hard to cut taxes, too. That rule makes it hard to cut other programs as well, since taxpayers can never enjoy the savings. Reforming the budget rules should have been among the GOP's first acts when it took control of Congress. Until it does, expect only more surrenders to big government.

■ The polls don't look good for California's Proposition 38, a school-choice initiative promising a voucher for every child in the state. As the school-choice version of HillaryCare—a massive proposal spurning incremental change in favor of a great leap forward that many voters aren't ready to make—it has never had much public support. If school choice becomes a reality in the short term, it will be through efforts like Michigan's Proposal 1, which targets kids in failing school districts only. This initiative, in fact, has a fighting chance in November thanks to years of smart grassroots work and strong support from the Catholic Church. But victory will depend on a surge in the final weeks, when Proposal 1 is sure to be outspent by the teachers' unions. If it succeeds, it will become a model for initiatives elsewhere—including California, if anyone there is brave enough to think about school choice after Election Day.

■ President Clinton is threatening to veto the bill that funds the Commerce, Justice, and State Departments unless it includes an amnesty for more than 1 million illegal immigrants. According to a draft report from the INS, however, the 1986 amnesty of 2.7 million illegal aliens led to a surge in new illegal immigration. Relatives of the newly legalized immigrants streamed into the country, illegally, at a rate of more than 800,000 a year. And even apart from the amnesty, legal and illegal immigration are simply two sides of the same coin, with 1.3 million green cards having been given to illegal aliens as part of the normal "legal" immigration process between 1987 and 1996—189,000 in 1996 alone. The latest proposed amnesty is just another way to keep open the floodgates.

"LET ME TELL YOU, DETROIT IS JUST ITCHING TO BUILD ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLES!"

■ The attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* killed 17 sailors, including two women (welcome to the new, sensitive U.S. military). The *Cole* may not be the equivalent of Desert One, a debacle that symbolizes a perilous decline of American power. But the backdrop to the attack is troubling nonetheless. Such a sophisticated terrorist operation typically depends on well-developed networks for support, and that no word had trickled out to U.S. intelligence is another sign of declining American prestige in the region. The Gulf War coalition against Iraq has almost entirely collapsed, and America's credibility has been frayed by its

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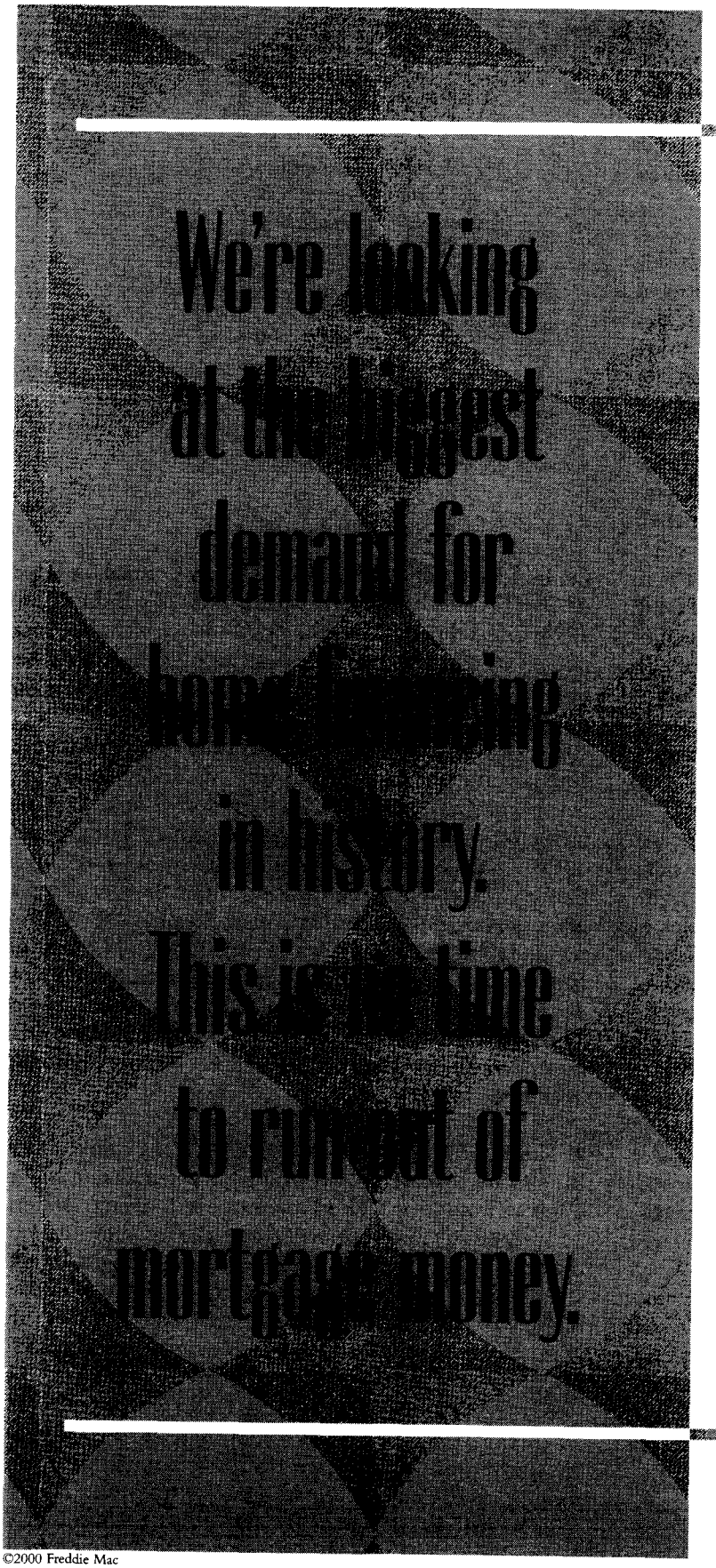

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periodic and ineffectual cruise-missile attacks against Saddam. To restore America's reputation in the Gulf, the next president will have to adopt a tougher strategy toward the Iraqi regime. But it would be a good first step to hunt down the perpetrators of this crime, and send them swiftly to oblivion.

■ Slobodan Milosevic has gone the way of Jaruzelski, Gorbachev, and all the rest of the Communist detritus of Europe. Serbia's bloodless revolution is a tribute to the courage and shrewdness of the opposition, led by Vojislav Kostunica, and a nice punctuation mark to the West's odd victory in Kosovo (odd because bombing sortie after bombing sortie at 15,000 feet destroyed remarkably little of the Yugoslav army). But as David Pryce-Jones points out (page 36), there will likely remain a gangster element in Serbian politics. Also, Kostunica's triumph shouldn't be overinterpreted. It isn't necessarily an indication of the magic power of sanctions, which have failed to effect any change in Iraq, Cuba, Libya, or Burma. Nor is it necessarily a vindication of tying up—between deployment, support, and retraining—much of the U.S. army in Europe on the ground in Bosnia and Kosovo as "peacekeepers." The resources required still seem disproportionate to the American interest there; we should husband them for more important threats. Perhaps Milosevic's ouster will hasten the day when we will.

■ It becomes ever more clear that the phrase "peace process" will sooner or later join other once-innocuous expressions like "final solution" or "cultural revolution" in the Devil's Dictionary of political jargon. Three recent examples of "peace processes" illustrate the point. Most prominently, of course, there is the one that began with the Oslo Accords of 1993 between Israel and Yasser Arafat's PLO. Then there are the events flowing from the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 in Northern Ireland. And not to be forgotten is the "peace process" initiated in Sierra Leone the following year by Jesse Jackson. All these "processes" have as their foundation an agreement between, on the one side, parties that practice democracy, and on the other, parties controlled by a criminal, terrorist, or revolutionary organization. All three "processes" followed the same route. The democratic side delivered what they had promised; the nondemocrats did not. When their default was pointed out to them, the nondemocrats first retreated into legalisms, then lost their tempers. Pressed by powerful allies to "keep the peace process alive," the democratic side then made further concessions, which were met with the same scornful intransigence and bad faith. Is it too much to hope that the rather obvious lessons here will one day be learned?

■ On September 28, Ulster Television broadcast a documentary about gunrunning out of Florida by the Irish Republican Army. In the program, a U.S. Justice Department prosecutor and an FBI agent were interviewed. Both said that the smuggling operation had been authorized by the IRA leadership—the so-called Army Council, on which sit Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. According to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, under which Northern Ireland is supposed to be advancing toward multicultural harmony, the IRA should now be decommissioning its weapons, not acquiring new ones. Adams and McGuinness are, of course, parties to that agreement. It then transpired that the U.S. government had tried to stop the documentary from being broadcast. Jane Fort, the U.S. consul in Belfast, had phoned the producers of the program, saying: "The president of the United States has asked me to call you—Bill Clinton himself." Apparently the administration thought the program might damage the increasingly fragile political situation in Ulster (read: Bill Clinton's legacy). So: The fact that Irish terrorists are rearming when they are supposed to be *dis*arming brings no public rebuke from the White House. That a TV producer should try to alert the public to that treachery calls for some high-level arm-twisting. Clintonism in action.

■ The Runnymede Trust is a race-relations think tank in Britain. Three years ago, the Blair government commissioned a report from it on "The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain." That report has now appeared. Among its recommendations: that British history needs to be "revised, rethought, or jettisoned"; that the United Kingdom is "a community of communities," not a nation; and that the terms "Britain" and "British" will have to be abandoned because "Britishness . . . has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations." The government's initial reaction to the report was favorable. But when the contents became widely known they raised a tsunami of public outrage, and Blair and his ministers are now running away from the thing as fast as they can. The fact remains that this infamous document was produced by 23 panjandrums drawn from the Great and the Good of British society: a newspaper editor, a police chief, distinguished academics, bureaucrats, and retired politicians. The ordinary people of Britain now know what their elites think of them,

Al, Seated

He seemed a tad diminished—
Like Samson shorn of hair.
Incisors were retracted, too,
Like Grendel's in his lair.
The pancake wasn't slathered
(It wasn't Halloween),
But when the whoppers surfaced, Al
Turned seasonally green.

—W. H. von Dreele

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and of their absurd, medieval attachment to the land of their ancestors.

■ Six-year-old Molly Nash of Englewood, Colo., has a new brother, Adam. He was conceived in a laboratory dish in order to provide her with bone marrow that could save her from a life-threatening disease. It will be wonderful if Molly does survive, and there is every reason to think that Adam will grow up in a loving home. Yet there is something disquieting about this story all the same. People have all sorts of reasons for wanting children, and ordinarily no one thinks to second-guess them. But the conjunction of the reason Adam was conceived and the way he was conceived ought to trouble us. Many embryos were created and discarded as part of the effort to find a suitable blood donor for Molly. With the best of intentions, we are moving toward a society in which it will be routine for human beings to be made rather than begotten; products rather than gifts. It will not stop with embryos.

■ Dr. Laura Schlessinger has had another go at apologizing to homosexuals for calling them "deviant," "biological errors," etc. This time she took out a full-page ad in *Variety*'s special issue on gay Hollywood—just in time for the Jewish Day of Atonement. Her earlier words, the good doctor now says, were "poorly chosen." Many people, she now understands, perceived them as "hate speech." Is she forgiven? Don't be silly. The homosexual-activist crowd is absolutist. No public expression of disapproval for their "lifestyle" can be permitted to stand; no person who expresses such disapproval—however mildly, and with however many retractions and apologies—can be permitted to survive in public life. These people don't want any trifling apology, however heartfelt; they want Dr. Laura torn to pieces by dogs in the streets of Greenwich Village. Nothing less will please them. The question whether American society is willing to tolerate homosexuals has been settled: Yes, it is. But are they willing to tolerate the rest of us?

■ Gus Hall was born Arvo Halberg, to Finnish Wobblies in Minnesota in 1910. He joined the Communist party when he was a teenager, and never deviated from its directives. He was trained in Moscow for two years; indicted for plotting to use dynamite in a Depression strike (he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor); and spent six-and-a-half years in jail for advocating the violent overthrow of the government. Other governments enjoyed his support: As general secretary of America's Communist party, Hall supported Leonid Brezhnev's invasion of Czechoslovakia, and attended the funeral of Ho Chi Minh. A changing world left him with few role models, though in his old age he spoke well of North Korea. Impotence lent him a certain charm, and colleges would invite him to speak as a one-man freak show. They were wrong to do so: Hall approved stagnation, tyranny, and mass murder. After wishing so many to the grave, he finds his own.

THE MIDEAST

Wages of Weakness

THE Oslo peace process was doomed by its structural flaw. Israelis and Palestinians were to do the easy things first, and leave to the end the hard issues. Two of these revolved around the sovereignty of Jerusalem, and the right of Palestinian refugees from 1948 to return. A two-stage process was like asking the parties to jump across a wide abyss by taking an extra stride in midair. It was an open invitation to extremists to raise their demands in the final stages of settlement, in the certainty that they could sabotage trust and kill the idea of peace. This is exactly what has happened, and the parties now lie bleeding at the bottom of the abyss.

At the recent Camp David meeting, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak offered Yasser Arafat concessions which went far beyond those originally envisaged by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. Unlike his predecessors or his political rivals, Barak believes that peace in the region depends upon appeasement and retreat by Israel. Previously he had almost begged Syria to come to terms. Soon after, in a scrambled evacuation at the expense of his local allies, he handed the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon over to Hezbollah, a group that believes that Muslims have a duty to kill Jews. Finally, in this humbling the Israelis have inflicted on themselves, Arafat was offered almost the whole West Bank, a degree of sovereignty in Jerusalem, and an agreement that large numbers of refugees would be allowed to return.

A statesman would have accepted such gifts as quickly as was decent. Instead Arafat concluded that Israel was on the run, and that violence would bring him yet greater rewards. Violence has in fact produced the opposite of everything Arafat expected. Palestinians stand before the world as religious fanatics, self-deluding opportunists, irrational, and, in some cases, bestial. Among other horrors, a young Palestinian was photographed gleefully holding up to an ecstatic mob the bloody hands with which he had just killed a stray Israeli. Such a scene, understandably, discredits the peace movement in Israel.

Yet another summit conference convened by Westerners, with yet another Arab summit to follow, is a display of moral and political bankruptcy. None of the outside parties can bring much meaningful pressure to bear, for good or ill. Militarily, the Arab countries are in a position to bang drums, not to wage cross-border war. But hatred is loose in the land, and it will be enough if this is contained for the time being. Israelis and Palestinians are in a position to do one another terrible damage. Among possible nightmares are Islamic suicide bombers, kidnappings, and hijackings—and in reprisal, the death of many Palestinians and the flight, perhaps, of even more from large parts of the West Bank in a repeat of 1948.

Appeasement and retreat have brought Israel to this pass. Now it has to take the very different course of finding the courage to be true to itself. Israeli society is open and democra-

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tic. The Israeli army can easily beat back any challenges on the battlefield, but real victory in this endless conflict means refusing to go down the path blazed by primitive and tribalistic hatred. That is the true mark of strength. Yesterday's man, Arafat perpetuates the self-defeating hatred that has become the legacy of his unfortunate people, handed down the generations in the blood stream. Not strength at all, this is weakness, and a guarantee of defeat in the end. Only an Israel standing firm on its values can persuade some future Palestinian leadership that hatred is not the way to peace. There is no other hope.

CAMPAIGN 2000

Bush on the Merits

OUR judgment in the presidential race is reinforced by a consideration of the discrete issues it has engaged. Foremost among these, as always, is foreign policy. The Clinton administration's policy has been reckless, expanding our commitments promiscuously while undermining our ability to meet them. Its policy toward Iraq is a shambles. Its policy toward Israel has been based on chimeras. Relations with our European allies have deteriorated. The strategic threat posed by China has been underestimated. Gore might compile a better record in some of these areas. But Bush is likely to do better than Gore. The policies Bush has outlined are traditionally conservative, avoiding both the isolationist and adventurist tendencies within the Right.

Next in importance, given its self-aggrandizement over the last generation, is the Supreme Court. If Gore were able to appoint several justices, the probable results would include an end to promising experiments in educational freedom, the entrenchment of an absolutist ideology of abortion-on-demand, and a new lease on life for racial quotas. It is harder to predict how Bush appointees would judge. But by calling for "strict constructionist" judges who leave the task of legislating to the legislators, Bush has at least set forth the right criteria.

On domestic policy, Gore offers a grab bag of statist and balkanizing proposals that would weaken the country: several new entitlements, creeping price controls on drugs, full public financing of elections, complications in the tax code, a federal hate-crimes law, the extension of civil-rights protections to gays as a class, and harsh restrictions on energy use. A burgeoning surplus would give him a chance to expand the federal government as much as LBJ and Nixon did.

Bush's domestic platform is much more in keeping with the country's founding traditions. It includes missile defense, tax cuts, an investment-based reform of Social Security, modest moves toward school choice, and free trade. Worthwhile in themselves, these policies would also make it easier to achieve other conservative policy reforms down the road. Bush's Social Security proposal, for instance, would expand the new investor class and thus, potentially, the coalition for free markets. Tax cuts will make it easier to resist demands for new entitlement programs. And so on.

On some issues Bush has, of course, been disappointing. He has not advocated any substantial retrenchment of federal activity, and has made a lot of promises to spend tax money. He has been weak in confronting racial preferences, blind to the dangers of uncontrolled immigration and the flaws of bilingual education, and silent on the debate over the feminization of the military. But this is merely to say that Bush would not enact the entire conservative agenda; that his election would not obviate the need for further political action by conservatives. His election would, however, advance conservative aims.

And conservatives would still be able to prod Bush to the right when needed. When Bush's father was inaugurated, NR promised to be his foul-weather friend and his fair-weather critic. We have given the son the same treatment over the last year. We expect to keep doing so—for the next eight years, we hope.

CAMPAIGN 2000 II

Intelligence Test

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS was arguably the most intelligent man to occupy the White House. As a boy, he hobnobbed with Jefferson, Lafayette, and his own extremely intelligent father, and lived in France, Holland, and Russia, as well as America. He had been Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard. He wrote competent poetry, and had a passionate amateur interest in astronomy. In a four-way race in 1824, he managed to squeak to victory, but in 1828 he went head-to-head with Andrew Jackson, a frontier general and politician who had never been abroad or written a book. (Adams privately called him a "barbarian.") Old Hickory cleaned his clock.

It is absurd to equate Al Gore and George W. Bush with Adams and Jackson; Gore isn't smart enough, and Bush never faced any hostiles. Our own judgment is that Gore is just smart enough to lead him seriously astray, and that Bush is smarter than most of the people calling him dumb. But since the media have put the 2000 race onto the template of brains vs. the lack thereof, it is worth considering the role of intellect in the presidency.

There have been other brainy presidents and presidential candidates besides John Quincy Adams, but their record has not been good. Thomas Jefferson, stylist and philosophe, had one good term and one awful one. James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, may have been the worst president ever—he was the only one to allow enemies to burn the White House in wartime—unless that distinction belongs to professor and author Woodrow Wilson, who ruined the postwar world with his rigid self-righteousness at Versailles. Franklin Roosevelt was a Hudson Valley squire who got into Harvard by class-profiling; his first presidential opponent, mining engineer and executive Herbert Hoover, and his last, topnotch prosecutor Thomas Dewey, were certainly smarter than he was, though none have claimed that they were better politicians.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. famously said of FDR that he had a second-class mind and a first-class temperament.

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Temperament is the key quality in electoral success (another pol with a first-rate temperament, alas, is Bill Clinton). More important for success as a statesman is judgment: the ability to sift circumstances, options, and the conflicting proposals of brilliant and combative colleagues, and to fashion a prudent and principled course. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln had about the spottiest educations of any chief executives. Yet they were able to steer through eras of upheaval, guided in part by a deep understanding of America's goals and purposes.

Men admire reflections of themselves, and so historians and journalists are inclined to overrate the clever and the well-spoken. If Washington is not automatically given the preeminence his contemporaries accorded him, that is because it is harder to fit him into college reading lists. Lincoln turned out to be a poet, which has helped his posthumous reputation, though when he was first nominated he struck people as an inferior choice.

A president must be able to understand the problems that face him, and (except in times of unusual peace) he has to be able to articulate what he knows. The fact remains that intellect and prose style can, to a great extent, be delegated. Not to be delegated are the ability and the will to make choices, which school résumés do not predict.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Is it true that Albert Jay Nock was an inspiration in your life?

His book *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* is engaging, provocative, and an exercise in thought. Our family library has allotted a special section just for his works.

Please share with us perhaps one special meeting, wherein Mr. Nock's profundity may have affected you.

Respectfully,
Theo Karantsalis
Miami Springs, Fla.

Dear Mr. Karantsalis: See my book *Let Us Talk of Many Things*, final entry.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Bill: *Noch einmal*, your muniment to the genre is reconfirmed: the inspissated plot, the nimiety of character, the swank consistories, the vespertine eclosions, and your keloidal brio to resolution.

Bravo! Thanks. *Continuez dans le même esprit.* Knowing me, you can be sure I really enjoyed Gabriela's prehensility.

Best,
Jim
[James C. Neely, M.D.]
Napa, Calif.

Dear Jim: That's the nicest thing ever said about my novel *Spytime.*

May I quote you?

Warmest, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I am an ardent subscriber and have enjoyed your magazine for some time. However, a recent NR editorial, "The Tax Man Goeth," prompts me to write.

I agree tax cutting is a good thing, and we need more of it. But when you refer to people as "workers," it comes across as if there's something almost Socialist or Communist about it. Maybe I'm nitpicking here, but I take offense.

Yes, I do work for a living as a metal fabricator, and I enjoy what I do, but I don't think of myself as a "worker." I'm not some faceless, nameless man, toiling away.

Samuel T. Dyer
Bend, Okla.

Dear Mr. Dyer: No, you shouldn't—we shouldn't—let the Marxists appropriate the word, though of course it has been for them (and their godfather) a staple.

But the generic meaning of the word is, simply—one who works, which is practically all of us.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: When the "postmodern" definition came up, I thought: It's a good thing he didn't try to apply it to architecture. *Now you've gone and done it!*

Postmodern(ism) in architecture is practically the opposite of "the renewal of form," as you suggest.

"A mutation freak produced by the forced, illegitimate, reasonless mating of unlike species—period architecture and contemporary architecture—it is anti-humanistic, anti-culture, anti-beauty, anti-architecture, anti-architect, anti-professional, anti-individual, incoherent, irrational, and destructionist: incomprehensibly bad as well as inherently bad [and the recourse of those incapable of good design]" (from the unpublished book, *Nature, Human Nature, Architects, Architecture, and Design*).

And that's just for starters. Leftists should love it.

Sincerely,
Parham Henry Baker, Architect
Lexington, Ky.

Dear Mr. Baker: I yield. . . . The points you make remind us of the extraordinary anomaly, which is that bad architecture is the product of architects. But not of architects who are dismissed as under-instructed, or evil, or lazy. A bad doctor is one of the above. But a bad architect, in the sense we're talking of the problem, is someone who produces ugly buildings. Bad musicians compose bad music, which deliquesces. Bad architects, of course, compose buildings that go on and on.

What to do about that is a quite awful problem, and the virtues of zoning surreptitiously suggest themselves, though what would Howard Roark have said?

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Gore on the Run

His campaign flails

RAMESH PONNURU

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

"WE have a doctor here with us?" Al Gore is asking. He's in the middle of addressing a rally, and an eleven-year-old boy on the stage with him has fainted.

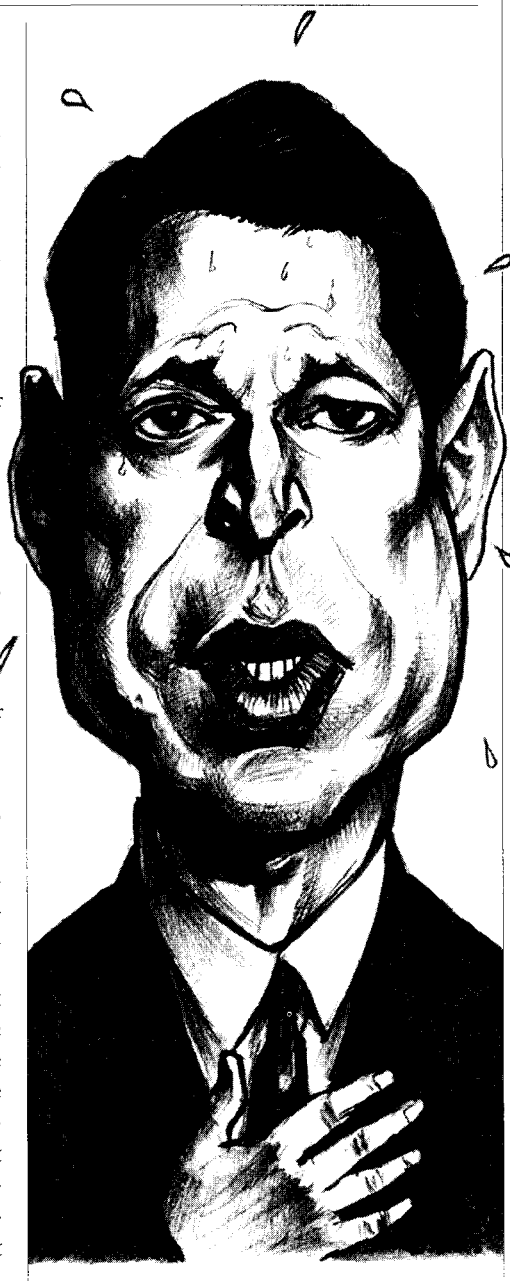
This is not a good day for Gore. The second presidential debate was held two nights before, and the consensus is that he lost it. His lead in the polls has melted away. The crowd at Greene Square Park is small and not too enthusiastic. It is Friday the 13th. Gore is off his stride. And now there's an unconscious child at his feet.

Fortunately, there is indeed a doctor at the park, and the boy is carried off for care. Gore picks up where he left off, grinning: "I believe I was just talking about health care for children . . ." Al Gore: Getting Health Care to Children, 24/7.

It's a moment that captures some of Gore's strengths on the stump. He's quick, undaunted by setbacks, determined to get his message out. But this rally is, for all those qualities, a failure. And listening to Gore helps explain why his campaign, too, is failing—and why, absent a shift in strategy, he will lose.

Lest the wrong impression be given, it should be noted that the next day Gore held a much larger rally at Wayne State University in Detroit. The crowd there was more excited, and Gore gave a better performance as a result. Like most politicians, he feeds off a crowd's energy; unlike the best ones, as he demonstrated in Iowa, he cannot supply that energy himself.

Gore is almost always fast on his feet, but not fast enough to keep his moves from showing. When storm clouds gather during his speech in Detroit, he makes a reference to the fact that gets people to laugh, and draws their attention back from the skies. In Iowa, Gore doesn't mention racial profiling; in Detroit, where the crowd includes a lot of black people, he pledges to end it—and mentions that he will also do so for Arab-Americans, an important Democratic constituency in Michigan. He condemns discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, or "who you select as your partner," presumably figuring that the fabled Reagan Democrats of Macomb County don't want to hear about "sexual orientation."



Al Gore by Ismael Roldan

All these fine adjustments to Gore's message, however, do not alter the fact that the message itself is not compelling. It is, to begin with, exceedingly negative. These days, Gore himself is keeping away from the personal shots. Those he leaves to his surrogates. By way of introducing Gore, Lee Clancey, the Republican mayor of Cedar Rapids, offered this rationale for backing the other party's candidate: "I wanted a president who has the intelligence to understand the issues. Who has the ability to articulate those issues." The crowd whooped.

Gore himself has been hammering Bush over his record in Texas, apparently figuring that it's the only tactic that worked for him in their second debate. Gore was in the middle of castigating Bush for not getting health insurance to children in Texas when the boy fainted (no doubt from fright).

The argument about Texas can get pretty silly. Tom Vilsack, the governor of Iowa, warmed the crowd up for Gore with this blast: "I just have one thing to say to the vice president's opponent: We are proud of Iowa, we have the highest quality of life in the country, we've got the greatest education system in the country, we've got the best health-care system in the country, and we don't want Texas up here! We don't want your education plan! We don't want your health plan! We don't want you!" He made it sound as though if Bush were elected, everyone in Iowa would have to wear cowboy boots.

It's hard to believe this line of attack will succeed. Bush effectively parried it in the second debate: If he's been such a lousy governor, why was he reelected with 68 percent of the vote? But Gore is sticking to it. The press release accompanying his visit to Detroit started blasting the Texas health-care record in its second sentence; it spent far more time on Bush's

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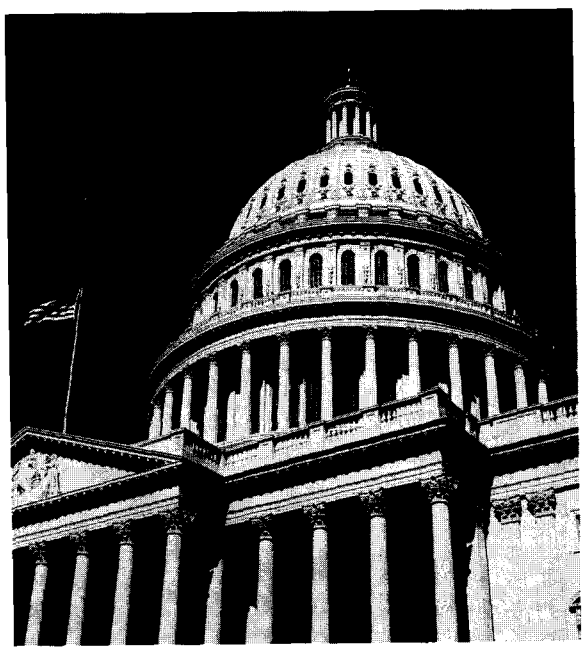
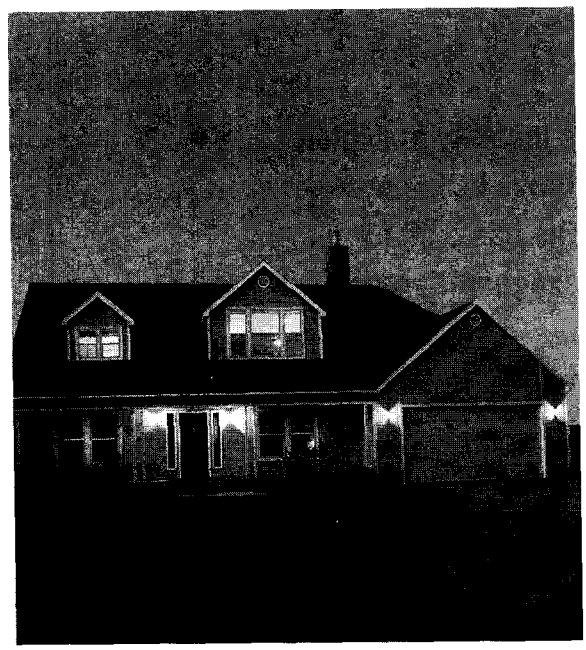
Which house should decide where a kid goes to school?





If you chose the house on the left, congratulations. You're obviously content with our current education system, a system in which federal, state and local governments have control over your kids' schooling.

Parents have authority over almost every other aspect of their children's lives. But in the most important one of all—their education—they're frozen out of the process.

If the results of the system were more promising, parents might be more tolerant. But the more money the government throws at our schools the worse they seem to get. Eighty years of rising spending. Eighty years of disappointing results.

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health-care record than on Gore's own health-care plans. Bush is "bad news for Michigan," according to the campaign, because "Texas ranks near the bottom nationally in the number of children with health insurance; Michigan ranks 13." And from these facts the good people of Michigan are supposed to conclude . . . what? That Bush would spend his time in the Oval Office revoking the health policies of kids in Detroit?

■

Gore's inability to exploit good times is, in part, the price he has paid for his exaggerations.

■

Some Democrats fear that Gore is making a mistake not only in what he is saying but also in what he is not saying: notably, the words "President Clinton." Gore isn't mentioning Clinton on the stump. In part, this silence reflects a vice president's need to establish himself as his "own man." (Apparently he still has work to do: At the Michigan rally, Senate candidate Debbie Stabenow almost calls him the vice-presidential nominee, then catches herself.) But it also suggests that Gore still believes that his connection to Clinton is a political liability in the wake of the Lewinsky scandal. Most journalists and Republican strategists have shared this assumption. But lately Bush has stopped trying to link Gore to Clinton. Bush now seems more eager to draw distinctions between Gore and Clinton, with the former cast as a dangerous left-winger lacking the latter's moderation. In the second presidential debate, Bush praised Clinton more often than Gore did.

It was prudent for Gore to separate himself from Clinton's morals. But Gore has also, to some extent, separated himself from Clinton's administration—which is odd, considering that it is more popular than he is. For that matter, Clinton is more popular than he is. (If Gore loses, Clinton will be the one trying to separate the two.)

Democratic strategists always assumed that some of the credit for all the successes attributed to the administration—the stock-market boom, the decline in crime, etc.—would rub off on Gore. It hasn't yet. And Gore isn't doing much to claim the credit, either. He says that Bush would roll back the gains of the last eight years far more often than he pats the administration's back for them. As has often been remarked, Gore is most comfortable on the attack.

Gore's inability to exploit good times is, in part, the price he has paid for his exaggerations. Aides have shied away from boasting about Gore's reinventing-government initiative because he has been caught overstating its success before. And while Bush may give a speech about the New Economy soon, Gore can't. He may have spent a lot of time in Silicon Valley and he may have plenty of thoughts about the subject, but there have been too many inventing-the-Internet jokes for Gore to say anything without being ridiculed.

The effect of all this is to pull Gore away from the center and toward the Left. Because he isn't running on Clinton's record, he has to run on his own government-expanding plans. And his attack on Bush's record is that he didn't expand the government of Texas enough.

Gore is aware of the danger, of course. In the second debate, he was careful to say that his health-care plans would not involve more bureaucracy and that his gun-control proposals would not be confiscatory. He's even taken to arguing that he would shrink the federal government while Bush would expand it, although the sheer absurdity of this line may limit its usefulness. He's quit talking about the mortal struggle between "the people" and "the powerful," at least using those terms. All the same, the Gore campaign's ideological position puts it in dangerous territory.

No wonder Gore's aides are getting a little testy. They're complaining that reporters are too hard on Gore, pouncing on his every misstatement while giving Bush a free ride. And the press is just sympathetic enough to Gore to convince itself that it's biased against him. But when a Democratic campaign starts whining about media bias, it's safe to say it's not doing well. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 II ■

He's Got Issues

How Bush climbed back

RICHARD LOWRY

At the time, the title of George W. Bush's September 16 speech to California Republicans seemed wishful thinking: "Issues Win."

Almost all the pundits interpreted Bush's resort to substance as a sign of desperation, because "the issues favor Gore." It did seem an unlikely turnabout—the determinedly nonideological Bush campaign trying to polarize the election on ideological grounds, against the sitting vice president of an administration that since 1994 had neutralized many conservative issues. But the September speech would prove one of the most important of the year, setting up a contrast between Bush's agenda of individual choice and Gore's of governmental command that would help tip the race in Bush's favor. It may not be 1980 or 1994—years of antigovernment backlash—but neither is it safe yet to be a "big government liberal." Even one who loves his wife passionately.

In his September speech, Bush made a limited-government case against almost every aspect of the Gore agenda. He criticized Gore's tax cuts for excluding too many taxpayers and relying on government controls: "You may get a break on transportation—but only if you drive around in a hybrid electric/gasoline engine vehicle." He attacked Gore spending programs for threatening to "run the government back into the red": "My plan has spending discipline. His just has spending." Gore's Social Security program would mean "massive government debt" and "a staggering tax increase," his health-care plan would "force you to join a government-run HMO." In a speech two weeks later in Green Bay, Wis., Bush sharpened the

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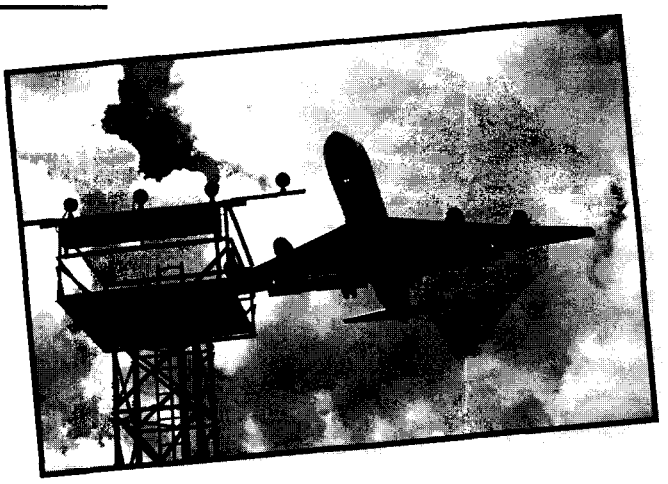
The Clinton Administration has issued an executive order compelling all Federal agencies to provide expanded services in multiple languages. We're wondering if this applies to air traffic controllers?



When will this nonsense stop? From criminals who get off with the *"I didn't understand what the police were saying"* defense, to Federal agencies ordered to translate tons of programs for non-English speakers. On the surface this sounds like just another wasteful government program in search of a way to spend more money. Take a closer look and you begin to wonder if the government's real intent is to create a society modeled after Canada's dual language mess that's cost some $10 billion dollars over the last decade. But money aside, giving immigrants the impression that learning our common language – English – isn't critical today to succeed is perhaps the greatest damage this type of government intervention leaves in its wake. With over 1.4 million members, we're fighting to prevent America from being divided by language. Declaring English our national language, and expecting immigrants to learn it would be a good place to start. We're not suggesting that Americans speak only English. The problem is that with some 329 languages spoken here how can government provide services in all of them? Doesn't it make more sense to teach English – our common language – to all immigrants. Do Something Today. Join Us. By remaining silent, you end up endorsing this latest attempt to divide our society.

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critique, warning that "if Gore gets elected, the era of big government being over is over."

That, of course, was a reference to the most memorable (non-Monica-related) phrase of the Clinton administration. Gore was vulnerable to having it turned against him because, in an overreaction to "Clinton fatigue," he had declined to run as Bill Clinton without the sex. Gore could have been the centrist who kisses his wife. Instead, he became the critic of business and advocate of dozens of new spending programs who kisses his wife. Gore essentially was throwing the Clinton political legacy out with the Oval Office trysts—a grievous mistake, once the Bush campaign discovered how to exploit it.

Which turned out to be by separating Gore from the president. Clinton scourges on the right had hoped Bush would launch a national anti-Clinton crusade, matching Sean Wilentz op-ed for op-ed in the battle to vindicate impeachment and prove the perfidy of the president once and for all. Instead, the Bushies essentially decided: "If you can't beat him, join him." They used Clinton as a wedge to pry Gore away from the center. In his Wisconsin speech, Bush knocked Gore for proposing three times the amount of spending that Clinton did in 1992, and for spurning Clinton's New Democrats. Worst of all, Gore would threaten the nation's prosperity, the Clinton administration's proudest bragging point.

The Bush big-government assault exposed a fundamental miscalculation of the Gore team. Gore strategist Stanley Greenberg had theorized that if Democrats identified themselves with religion and middle-class values (the purpose of the Lieberman pick), they could more easily sell economic populism: A spoonful of cultural conservatism helps the new entitlements go down. There is something to this idea. The long-lingering whiff of "acid, amnesty, and abortion" has helped keep working-class whites suspicious of the Democrats, even as they pose as their economic champions. This is why it was a mistake for the Bush campaign not to challenge more aggressively—with issues such as the Boy Scouts, gay marriage, and partial-birth abortion—the Gore-Lieberman ticket's rightward feint on social issues.

But Greenberg & Co. failed to account for one small thing: Economic liberalism itself is still unpopular, at least in the abstract (if not exactly in Congress—see Stephen Moore, page 32). In an early October *Washington Post* poll, voters said they favored smaller government with fewer services over a large government with many services by an almost a 2–1 margin. Given this broad preference, it hurt Gore when Bush drove higher the number of people who associated him with larger government. In the *Post* survey, voters thought Gore favored large government over small by 69 percent to 16, and Bush small government over large by 60 to 23. Advantage Bush. No doubt, it was some version of these numbers that prompted Gore in the second debate to announce his intention to "shrink the size of government," and, a few days later, to assail Bush for supposedly wanting to expand government. Can you say, "Me too"?

Bush's attack on Gore for being too liberal (although that particular word is anathema to Austin and Bush rarely uses it) represented a new phase in his "compassionate conservatism." The limited-government aspect of compassionate conservatism had (except when Bush was beating back John McCain in the primaries) been muted. Now, Bush was leading with it in a way his campaign probably wouldn't have imagined just two months earlier. There were other shifts as well. Compassionate conservatism had always been linked with Bush's "positive" message. He was relentlessly sunny and optimistic, which made for an appealing political personality. But, when it comes to winning votes, keeping fear alive is as important as hope. Importantly, Bush began to try to scare people about Gore, raising the prospect of IRS agents run amok and a dreary future of bureaucratic forms and lines at government offices. Bush changed the tone—not of Washington, but of his own campaign, in a more negative and effective direction.

Tough Bush by David Smith

Unreconstructed compassionate conservatism had also focused on the poor, toward whom faith-based programs were directed, and eschewed any talk of boosting the economy, which seemed a grubby concern compared to rallying "the armies of compassion." It was extraordinary, and extremely risky, for a Republican presidential campaign to cede the middle class and the economy to the Democrats. But as he slipped behind Gore, Bush started to take them back. He rolled out a "Blueprint for the Middle-Class," his first effort to speak explicitly to the interests of the bulk of American voters. And he (finally!) played to a traditional GOP strength by arguing that his program would be better for the economy. The title of his Green Bay speech was, "Maintaining Prosperity," something most Americans care about more than even the most winsomely compassionate education grant.

The final way in which Bush tweaked his message was a matter of sensibility, and more subtle and tentative. It never made much sense to marry a limited-government agenda to compassion. It is the sterner virtues of self-reliance and responsibility that are the underpinnings of the case for small government. The advocate of limited government is, after all, more often in a position to say "No" than "I feel your pain." The public seems to sense this instinctively. It is probably why, according to one survey, people don't think Bush is any more compassionate than the average Republican, even after the governor has bragged

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about his heart for a solid year. So, there was a natural opening for Bush, when not misting up on *Oprah*, to exhibit some of the manly tough-mindedness that drove McCain's candidacy in its glory days (when trying to understand McCain's appeal, don't think "soft money," think Jesse Ventura).

In his second debate with Gore, the most effective public performance of his candidacy, Bush found this uncompromising voice—he was like McCain, only with conservative ideas. A commonsensical, plain-spoken toughness ran through Bush's answers, all of which recognized the limits of government. *No*, we can't save every ungovernable nation in the world from itself. But we can wield a fearsome military capable of swiftly punishing our enemies. *No*, we can't abolish "hate" with new laws. But we can execute murderers. (Bush said the word "compassionate" twice in the debate; he referred four times to executing the killers of James Byrd.) *No*, we can't craft a new government program for every problem. But we can trust people with their own money. Stiff consequences—for challenging the U.S., for carrying illegal guns, for running failing schools—were a theme throughout Bush's answers.

This attitude cuts through typical political cant (Bush scoffed at Gore's tired catch phrase "gun-free schools"), and so it complements Bush's effort to run as an outsider. The idea that Gore routinely lies and exaggerates fits perfectly as well, since these are exactly the qualities people associate with Washington politicians. So, after a year of intermittent success trying to sell compassionate conservatism, Bush had found a different, tougher message of reforming Washington and protecting Americans from its depredations: "My opponent's ideas are shaped by a quarter-century in Washington—and they were tired even when his career began," Bush said in his California speech. "Every big idea means bigger government. Rules replace choices. Regulations replace responsibility. It is an old temptation: You start off trying to help people, and end up telling them what to do."

As the campaign entered its stretch-run, this message, with limited government at its core, had begun to bite. Maybe issues will win. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 III** ■

The Upper Middle

Gore's class problem

ROB LONG

AMERICANS are at their most dishonest when they talk about class. "I'm middle class," pollsters are told, over and over, by Americans of all social and economic backgrounds. "What about the middle class?" voters ask the candidates, who usually reply with a happy list of goodies from the federal feed bag to be passed out, the morning after Inauguration Day, to every self-proclaimed member of that all-encompassing group.

The middle class, in current American parlance, is such an elastic concept that it actually includes *all* classes. Poor folks, when asked, usually promote themselves into its ranks, and rich folks, when pressed, will dismiss their maxi-mansions and luxury cars with an airy wave of the hand and a "but really I'm just a middle-class guy who's done very well." Nobody bothers to correct them because nobody really knows what, exactly, makes a person "middle class."

In fact, the only socioeconomic group that *won't* happily join the ranks of the middle class is the upper middle class, which defines itself, roughly, by its quasi-liberal Joe Liebermanish temperament and its adherence to the religion of good taste. Upper middlers are the Restoration Hardware shoppers and the grilled-salmon-with-mango-salsa eaters. They are Merlot people.

They are also the educated class of America. The right degree from the right school—oh, let's just go out on a limb here and mention two, Harvard and Yale—automatically grants membership in the UMC, which is why so many of them are journalists and lawyers, and so few of them politicians and celebrities. Bill Clinton is a middle-class guy (actually, he's a lot lower, but that's kind of my point). *Hillary* Clinton is upper middle class. Get the difference?

Al Gore, obviously, is such a deeply entrenched member of the upper middle class that he can't connect to voters as anything but their savior ("I'll *fight* for you!"), and that's why his populism was so easy to puncture: It's not based on a scrappy Harry Truman little guyism, but on a desire to minister to the fatter, slower orders.

Which is why, though he went to better schools than Al Gore (Andover and Yale trump St. Alban's and Harvard any day), and though his blood is much bluer, George Bush just seems more middle class than the Prince of the Naval Observatory. Bush is a regular guy, whose background and education seem strangely at odds with his LBJ Jr. per-

Ivy League Al by Roman Genn

Mr. Long, a writer for television in Hollywood, is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW. He is a graduate of Andover and Yale.

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sona. But it is precisely this class confidence that allows him to connect so easily with the ordinary guy. Both candidates come from what is vaguely called the American aristocracy, but you can spot the *real* aristocrat a mile away. He's the middle-class one, the shot-and-a-beer guy, the sportsman frat-boy word-mangling firecracker. You might forget, for a moment, that this guy had a grandfather named "Prescott," and that one of his distant relations is the Queen of England. Oddly, Bush seems more Clintonian—more a sloppy-Joe-and-an-RC-Cola and did-you-see-that-game-last-night? dude—than his rival. The irony is that for eight years, when he should have been studying Clinton, Al Gore was . . . studying.

■

Al Gore didn't grow up rich and secure, he grew up privileged and ambitious.

■

And it's Gore, for some reason, who seems like the prissy princeling. But that, ultimately, is the downfall of the upper middle class—in the great swirling block party of American politics, the upper middlers live in a gated community, hemmed in by their Volvos and *All Things Considered*. Those below and above them on the pay scale have more in common with each other than either has with the UMC's, which is why Al Gore's constant screed about the "richest 1 percent" and Dick Cheney's $20 million love bump from his former employer haven't stirred the anger of the great and groaning middle.

Gore, though, is only a second-generation aristocrat, still proving himself, still trying to figure out why he's not beloved. Part of the problem is the fact that he went to a fancy day school. It's hard to convince people of this, but at places like Andover, it doesn't much matter who your parents are. They are, after all, hundreds (sometimes thousands) of miles away. You, however, are stuck there, in a Massachusetts hamlet, surrounded by kids as smart or smarter than you are, on your own. At places like St. Alban's in Washington, D.C., and Collegiate in Manhattan, the school social system is an extension of the town's—so, naturally, Al Gore is more comfortable among the Washington elite set that he grew up with. Bush continually pounds him for being a creature of Washington, and the criticism is more apt than Bush knows. Gore's whole problem—his multiple personalities, his creepy ambition, his uncomfortable self-awareness—stems from his puddin'-'n'-pie upbringing.

Which was itself a lie. Neither Pauline nor Al Sr. came from aristocratic stock. They could call themselves middle class and mean it. Al Gore didn't grow up rich and secure, he grew up privileged and ambitious. Bush grew up in a family in which his father was the ideal, something to live up to (or fail to live up to), something to rebel against, something—in a deeply Freudian way—to top. Gore, though, isn't competing with his dad or even living up to his expectations; he's fulfilling a career plan that they both shared. In the Gore house, politics was a career, not an elevated hobby. So instead of inculcating a gracious charm and a class security, his parents raised a careerist robot, a UMC schizophrenic, a Gorenstein monster, the kind of politician who owns a farm but can't convince anyone he's a farmer, who changes personality with every debate, who wins on points but loses on personality—which is exactly what you'd expect from an upper-middle-class candidate running in a plain-middle-class country.

This race is often compared to 1960 for its closeness and down-to-the-wire finish. But it's like 1960 in other ways, too. A sitting vice president who can't get traction, a charming, not-so-bright aristocrat in the shadow of his dad—these are interesting echoes, to be sure, but the truth is that Kennedy wasn't so much an aristocrat as a rich kid, and Nixon never enjoyed a shred of favorable press. Still, in Kennedy we had an untested, sometimes glib character, oozing energy and charm. And in Nixon we had a hardworking, smart-as-a-whip politician with major personality issues. In a way, Bush is a JFK with humility and scuff marks.

Gore, though, is Nixon with money. Gore is the Nixon that Nixon aspired to: Harvard degree, intellectual credentials, press approval. And don't forget: Nixon won, eventually. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 IV** ■

Conservative of the Future?

George Allen rises in Virginia

JOHN J. MILLER

REPUBLICANS around the country stood up and cheered for George Allen when he was elected governor of Virginia in 1993. For the GOP, this wasn't just another race: It was a huge morale boost twelve months after losing the White House. Virginia is one of the few states that elects officials in odd-numbered years, which means that every other November it receives rapt attention from the political classes anxious for something to talk about. Allen's victory snapped a streak of three straight gubernatorial losses for Virginia Republicans, and gave the national GOP reason for hope at a time when Democrats seemed ascendant. Immediately there was widespread agreement that Allen, a charismatic conservative, owned a bright future.

Now he's running against Sen. Charles Robb. This is one of only three contests this fall in which Republicans have a clear shot at a Senate seat currently held by a Democrat. (The others are in Nevada and New York, although the latter is starting to look out of range.) With GOP candidates limping along in Delaware, Florida, Minnesota, and Washington State, it's not inconceivable that either Dick Cheney or Joe Lieberman will spend plenty of time on Capitol Hill next year breaking tied votes. Virginia may act as a bellwether: If Allen's returns early in the evening of November 7 don't look good, Republicans around the country should brace for disaster.

And the stakes may rise even higher. When I sought advice from several prominent conservatives about questions for Allen, one said, "Ask him if he intends to complete a full, six-year

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term." The implication was that Sen. Allen might consider running against President Gore in 2004; he's held in that kind of esteem on the right. "Nobody has asked me that," said Allen when I posed the question. Then he paused for a moment, wanting to choose his words well. "I do intend to serve my term," he finally replied.

He probably would serve it out. But Allen, 48, won't easily escape the speculation that greater things lie ahead. He already has stellar name recognition. His father, also called George Allen, was a famous football coach. Today the moniker strikes a mystic chord of memory among American males, including those too young to know much about the elder Allen but who have heard sportscasters speak of him with reverence. George Allen is the football version of Connie Mack.

Name recognition can cut both ways, of course. Allen wouldn't be running this year if another famous name—Oliver North—hadn't failed to unseat Robb six years ago. Many Virginia Republicans now believe North was the weakest candidate they could have advanced, as he galvanized liberals the same way Hillary Clinton's New York run excites conservatives this year. And it may be a good thing North didn't win: The Republicans have enjoyed a Senate majority without him, and the Democrats still haven't found a GOP stock villain to replace Newt Gingrich. North would have been that man. He'd now be facing a tough reelection fight, and Allen would be biding his time until GOP Sen. John Warner retires (apparently not before 2008).

■

George Allen won't easily escape the speculation that greater things lie ahead.

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Chuck Robb once showed the promise Allen does now. As an ex-Marine who served in Vietnam, he had a great personal story. He was a moderate governor in a southern state, and some in his party thought he might break the Republican lock on the White House the way Bill Clinton eventually did. And as the son-in-law of Lyndon Johnson—the last Democratic presidential candidate to carry Virginia—he was incredibly well connected.

But then there was Miss Virginia, who made the cover of *Playboy* after claiming a year-and-a-half-long affair with Robb. The senator denied the charge, but did confess to receiving a "nude massage" from the woman in a New York hotel room. The incident undercut his Boy Scout image and ended any ambitions Robb might have had for national office.

Allen's own ambitions rest on his successful governorship. He abolished parole, reformed welfare, and introduced tough testing standards for education. But his appeal goes beyond his policies. He's tall, with a genuinely disarming smile; he wears cowboy boots everywhere he goes and chews tobacco so much his teeth are a bit stained. (He laughs when reporters highlight these two habits.) Most important, however, Allen has a tendency to say exactly the right thing,

... in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, 1789

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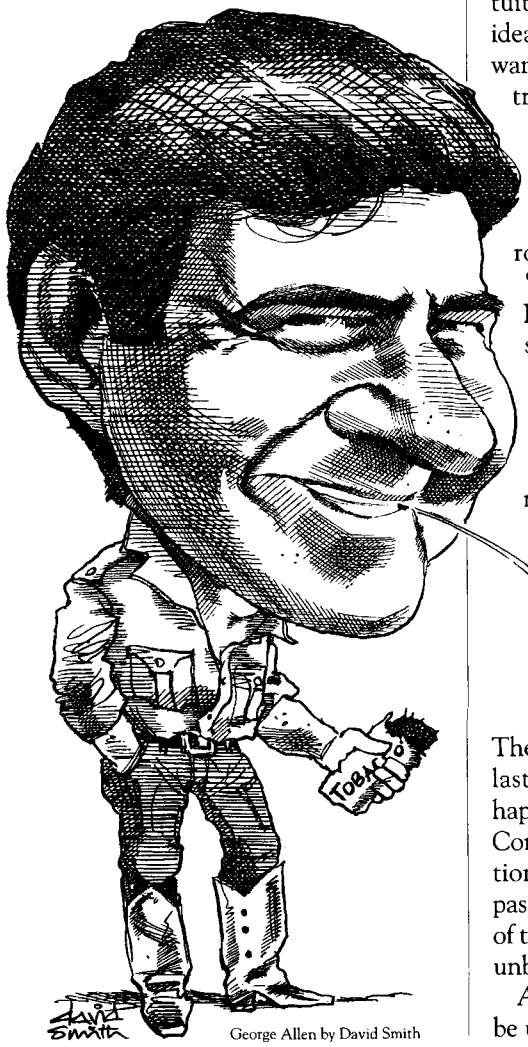
especially to conservative listeners: His favorite Supreme Court justice is Clarence Thomas; his favorite movie is *Braveheart*; he slammed Robb for supporting Clinton during impeachment.

Allen is devoted to federalism and local control; he refers to Thomas Jefferson in everyday speech the way most Republicans talk about Ronald Reagan. (Allen went to the University of Virginia—founded by Jefferson—for both college and law school.) In 1994, he rejected federal education funding because he worried about the government's "helping hands" becoming "strangling hands." He was the only governor in the country to turn down the Goals 2000 cash, which amounted to about $8 million for Virginia, and he overruled his state school board to do it. His defiance eventually crumbled when fellow Republicans, under attack, abandoned him on the issue. He took the money, but won plaudits on the right for his effort. This year, he opposes legislation sailing through Congress to cut highway dollars for states that don't accept a new federal limit for drivers' blood-alcohol levels. Allen led a successful effort to do in Virginia exactly what Washington would now mandate, but, he says, "I don't like the blackmail approach."



George Allen by David Smith

Pro-lifers generally consider Allen a friend for his role in passing a parental-notification law, even though Allen himself doesn't embrace the pro-life label. "I hold a position of reasonable moderation on the excesses of abortion," he says. He supports most of the movement's politically achievable goals, but not necessarily its ultimate ends. His signature issue this fall is a $1,000 tax credit for educational expenses, such as books and computers. (*Washington Post* news headline: "Allen Tax Credit Favors Wealthy Over Poorer Households.") The credit would apply equally to kids in public and private schools, including home schools, but it wouldn't cover tuition. Allen is generally cool to the idea of school choice. He says he doesn't want it imposed on anybody—local control again—but supports the choice bill benefiting low-income kids in Washington, D.C.

Allen has led Robb in polls from the start, but the senator has narrowed the gap to just a few points. "Robb is a good closer," warns Ed Kilgore of the Democratic Leadership Council. Virginia is home to tens of thousands of current and former government workers, who may not take kindly to the Republican's anti-Washington rhetoric. The Left, perhaps sensing Allen's national potential, would love to stop him. The NAACP suspended the head of a local chapter for endorsing Allen, and the group has even joined the Sierra Club in paying for ads against him. There's some concern it might also air last-minute race-baiting charges, perhaps on black radio stations, about the Confederate History Month proclamation Allen issued as governor. In the past, Allen has attracted about a quarter of the black vote. If he does it again, he's unbeatable.

And if he wins this November, he may be unbeatable for a long time. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 V ■

Watch Rick Lose?

Why Sen. Hillary seems likely

ROBERT A. GEORGE

In his first few days as a Senate candidate last May, Rep. Rick Lazio was both ubiquitous and refreshing. One day after formally announcing his candidacy, he appeared on all five Sunday talk shows, looking sharp and confident. New York Republicans were elated with the Long Island congressman's initial burst of energy and drive. While the "battle of the titans" envisioned when Mayor Rudy Giuliani was the expected candidate would not occur, there seemed, nonetheless, to be a better than even chance that the phrase "Senator Rodham Clinton" would never have to be uttered.

Even before Lazio entered the race, there were glimmers of hope. For several weeks—as Giuliani wrestled with illness and a disintegrating marriage, and decided what he wished to do—various Republican politicians were poll-tested against Hillary. Not one poll had Hillary over 50 percent against any potential opponent.

Upon Lazio's announcement, Hillary still led only 50–31—and that lead essentially evaporated in less than a week. Hillary's negatives were still high—in the low 40s—and most observers felt Lazio had "room to grow."

Six months later and a mere three weeks before the election, the elation is gone and the dominant sensibility wavers between despair and resignation. While Hillary's numbers still float in the high 40s (a couple of polls have her right at 50 or so), Lazio appears to be unable to gain on her. Of course, anything can happen—especially when it comes to the

Mr. George is an editorial writer for the *New York Post*.

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Clintons—but right now it looks as if Hillary is going to be the Empire State's next senator.

How did it all go wrong for Rick Lazio? In several ways, some of which were his own fault and some that were out of his hands.

Message—or lack thereof: Lazio has had difficulty creating a message that goes beyond the basic "Hillary the Lyin' Carpetbaggin' Old Democrat vs. Rick the Native Son . . . Old Democrat." During the campaign, he has repeatedly addressed the point that Hillary is not a New Yorker and that he is. While this message resonates with the base anti-Hillary voter, it doesn't seem to have greatly affected those in the middle. The "lying" or "credibility" aspect, maybe, but the geographical origin, no.

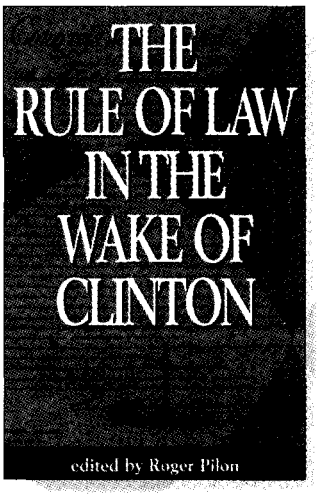
Part of the problem is that this state is perhaps the only one where hardly anyone cares where someone is born or raised. "It ain't where you're from, it's where you're at" is wisdom born from the streets of New York—and many people accept that. Furthermore, the state has a tradition of electing non-New Yorkers, from Robert Kennedy on the left to James Buckley on the right. Such candidates don't always win overwhelmingly—Kennedy ran more than a million votes behind LBJ in 1964—but they can win.

Kennedy's example also poses another problem for Lazio. While it was possible for a little-known state senator such as George Pataki to upset the liberal giant Mario Cuomo, New Yorkers generally prefer larger-than-life celebrities as U.S. senators. Kennedy filled that bill; Moynihan does; even Al D'Amato did, in a slightly different manner. Love her or hate her, Hillary has that iconic stature.

Meanwhile, Lazio has gone to great pains to portray himself as a not-too-offensive middle-of-the-road Republican, to counter Hillary's characterization of him as "Newt Gingrich's lieutenant." Even though most New York Republicans are to the left of the national party, ideological campaigns can work—as George Pataki and Al D'Amato have demonstrated. But Lazio's defensive effort has prevented him from making himself a clear-cut alternative to the First Lady—beyond the personal or "character" issue.

Murphy: After Al D'Amato's reelec-

"... our constitutional system is in disarray. The rule of law is severely damaged."*



The Rule of Law in the Wake of Clinton edited by Roger Pilon. 230 pages, $9.95 paperback.

"This collection of essays on the Clinton-Gore use of executive power demonstrates that **our constitutional system is in disarray. The rule of law is severely damaged.** The Department of Justice is no longer a neutral zone in the government. There is an appearance that the powerful are treated better by the law than the powerless; that the president, the vice president, and others of the privileged class are above the law."

—*Griffin B. Bell
Attorney General under President Carter

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—Richard L. Thornburgh
Attorney General under Presidents Reagan and Bush

"The rule of law is no pious phrase from a civics textbook. It is what stands between us and the arbitrary exercise of power by the state. It is the safeguard of our liberties. **The American democratic experiment and the freedom it guarantees are in jeopardy."**

—Henry J. Hyde
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee

In its political agenda, its legal briefs, and its executive actions, the Clinton administration has systematically abused the Constitution, common law, statutes, and legal institutions.

Contributors to *The Rule of Law in the Wake of Clinton* include Sen. Fred Thompson, Attorney General Bill Pryor of Alabama, Nadine Strossen, John Yoo, David Horowitz, Theodore Olson, Lillian BeVier, Ronald Rotunda, Douglas Kmiec, and editor Roger Pilon.

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tion loss in 1998, Republicans began to lose confidence in his favored gurus Arthur Finkelstein and Kieran Mahoney. Finkelstein was master of the "liberal, liberal, liberal" mantra that won for many conservatives in the late '80s and early '90s. Like many campaign tactics, that sharp, direct approach got wearisome after a while. Lazio turned instead to Mike Murphy, who had orchestrated John McCain's insurgent presidential effort earlier this year.

On the face of it, this wasn't a bad idea. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by 1.4 million in New York, so going with a campaign strategist who focused on independents and Democrats in his last major effort made a certain amount of sense. Murphy's first action was to introduce the "Mainstream Express" tour bus. Sound familiar?

Unfortunately, Murphy's presence has ticked off a number of key Republicans in the process. In recent weeks, both the *New York Post* and the *New York Observer* have reported at length on the direction of the campaign—and Murphy's controversial role in particular. The successful drive to allow McCain on the primary ballot managed to embarrass Gov. George Pataki (Lazio's key ally and mentor), who was supporting the effort to keep him off. Murphy has also remained involved in other high-profile campaigns, and this has caused many high-ranking state Republicans to grumble that non-New Yorker Murphy isn't putting enough effort into this race, and wonder if that is why Lazio is doing surprisingly poorly in the upstate area. A Republican running statewide usually has to win upstate by more than 20 points to offset the huge Democratic advantage in New York City; recent polls have Hillary trailing Lazio by 15 points upstate. If he can't do better there, this race is over.

Money: Lazio has done fine in raising federal dollars. Anti-Hillary sentiment has helped him find contributors across the country. But in September he came up with the idea of pushing Hillary into a mutual "soft money" ban, and the whole campaign-finance issue blew up in his face. Lazio ran an ad about his sponsoring of a bill giving disabled individuals greater access to work. The ad included text reading, "Paid for by Lazio 2000/Republican National Committee." Hillary's people cried foul, saying that the ad violated the terms of the soft-money cease-fire. In fact, it did not: The RNC money is legitimate coordinated federal money that the law allows parties to give, so Lazio asserted that it didn't fall under their agreement. Of course, the distinction between "soft" outside money and "hard" outside money is pretty much lost on the average voter. So Lazio backtracked: He yanked the ad, and returned the money to the RNC.

Hillary used the public's confusion over campaign-finance law against Lazio in the second debate, which nearly all observers believed she won handily. Like Al Gore, Lazio was forced into a timid "me-tooism" for fear of seeming too aggressive. This issue also drowned out Hillary's own money scandal: Her campaign had sent solicitations to people on an official White House visitors list. Lazio called the action illegal, which it is. But nobody cares.

There are other factors, out of Lazio's hands: State Republicans have had a couple of difficult election cycles, including D'Amato's loss and the collapse of Nassau County's dominant GOP machine. This would create an inhospitable environment for any Republican. But the bottom line is that Hillary Rodham Clinton is now the favorite to win this race. Considering the depth of antipathy towards her (even in the latest polls, she's barely at 50 percent), it's by no means over for Lazio. But if he wants to break out, he needs to sharpen his message (one promising approach he is now trying is to tie Hillary to former Gov. Mario Cuomo, who is anathema to upstate voters), and hope that George W. Bush's national surge continues. If Democrats are depressed, they might stay home. Hillary continues to have problems with Jews, among whom Democrats usually get more than 70 percent; she is stuck in the mid 50s.

But if the race stays as it is, the already-begun blame game will only accelerate. While many will fault Lazio himself, others are pointing fingers at Rudy Giuliani for taking so long to decide not to run. Either way, expect recriminations aplenty as the suspects are lined up to answer the question, "Who lost New York?" **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 VI ■

The Undeciding Factor

The scandal of America's least-informed voters

JONAH GOLDBERG

If you are honestly torn between eating a thick, juicy porterhouse steak and gnawing on a month-dead raccoon, you are not considered a gourmet. Generally, we do not expect a person who walks into a theater halfway through the film to be the most knowledgeable about what's happening in the movie. Few parents would ask someone to remove their child's appendix if that person couldn't tell the difference between a scalpel and an ice-cream scoop. In other words, in no sphere of human activity do we automatically associate indecision, laziness, and ignorance with shrewdness, commitment, and expertise.

No sphere, that is, but one. In American politics today, undecided voters are revered as the most virtuous and committed of citizens. Campaigns pander to them, which is understandable; their votes are political gold. But what does it say about the American media that they treat the least engaged and least serious voters with the highest regard? Read the newspapers and you will see statements by these voters combed over for significance, every bit as lovingly as the ancient Roman soothsayers would try to make sense of animal entrails. An example from the *Boston Globe*: "One day [undecided voter Sandra Nicka is] for Gore (her mother called from California to say he'd protect the environment), the next day it's Bush (she thinks he's funny) . . . 'If I had

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).

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to go out to dinner with one of them, I'd choose Bush . . . But here's what goes through my mind. Let's say a meteorite was coming toward Earth. Who has the better judgment? . . . I wish I could decide.'"

On her choice hangs the destiny of a great nation.

To see this orgy of ignorance at its most decadent, one need only watch the civic pornography known as the post-debate focus group. For each debate, the major news networks corral a host of citizens and ask them to be pundits. These "normal people" watch the debates like no other viewers in America do (except journalists), furiously taking notes with a mind toward making an interesting comment to Frank Luntz or Wolf Blitzer in lieu of saying, "Hi, Mom" into the camera. Invariably, these lumpen pundits say that they want more "details" or "specifics." I'd like to hear *more* about education, says one. I didn't hear enough about the Middle East, notes another. Back at the studio, anchors nod like anthropologists at a native religious ceremony.

But how did these people ever get the impression that presidential debates—less than a month before the election—are the traditional or even a good forum for unveiling detailed policies? Perhaps they missed the memo that explained that the answers to most of their questions can be found in these things called "newspapers" and "magazines," and in even greater detail on the campaigns' websites or on C-SPAN.

The truth behind the mass hagiography of undecided voters is that they are, for the most part, either lazy, ignorant, or just plain dumb. Last summer, just a week before the GOP convention, Harvard's Vanishing Voter Project conducted a survey that revealed that three out of four Americans didn't know when the convention would be held. One in four Americans do not know the name of their governor; fewer than half can name their congressman or state senator. Half of Americans are at a total loss to explain what the Supreme Court does. A recent cover story in *The New York Times Magazine* explored the rising trend among young people to get *all* of their political news from late-night comics: Almost half of those aged 18 to 29 "often" get information about the presidential campaign from the likes of Jay Leno.

No wonder so many people are undecided: Asking them to choose between candidates' tax plans is like asking them to identify which subatomic particle they find to be more erratic, gluons or quarks. Of course, there's nothing inherently irresponsible or immoral about being ignorant of American politics. One could argue that such apathy is a sign of generic social and political satisfaction. Indeed, those who argue that voter apathy is a sign of deep-seated social alienation usually have a deep-seated interest in stirring up trouble for their own benefit. Many undecideds are, in all likelihood, not morons but latecomers. Until now they've simply not

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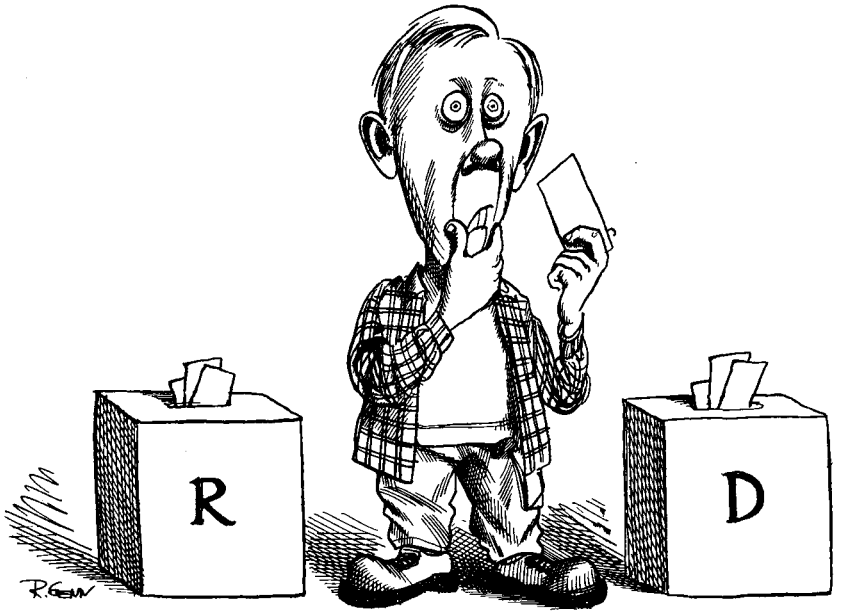
paid attention to the campaign, and that's why they want to hear more specifics. That's fine, but it should not be considered a sign of merit on their part; we don't think the best math students are the ones who cut class.

The real reason the press is so willing to lionize undecideds is that these voters are essentially independents, and that is what most journalists consider themselves. They see their own reflection in the pool of public indecision, their cynicism about the alleged lack of differences between the major parties confirmed in the ignorance of the least informed voters. But isn't there something morally questionable about putting such voters on a pedestal, and something deeply irresponsible about hectoring them to vote? The whole point of democracy is that citizens can rationally make their own decisions and determine their political interests. If they are unwilling to make those calculations in a serious way, why do we want them to vote? Voting is the last stage of civic engagement and participation, not the first. Asking Americans to vote when they can't tell you what the Supreme Court does is like asking someone to drive a school bus when they haven't even been behind the wheel of a car.

In a deeper sense, the media are simply perpetuating a hoax. There is, after all, no reason to believe that undecided voters *really* want the specifics they claim to want. If they did crave details, if they suffered from a ravenous yet unsated hunger for "specifics," that would be the easiest problem in the world for them to solve. Considering the mind-numbing amount of material out there for the asking—for any citizen, of any ideological persuasion—to say that you can't decide on a candidate without some more details is like saying you can't leave Boise because no one has given you a bus schedule. (Of course, this doesn't absolve the media for their frequently vapid coverage of the issues; but there's little evidence that undecided voters would have paid any attention to substantive coverage even if the networks offered it.)

The reality is that most undecideds are trying to figure out which guy they like most, and which will be more fun to watch for the next four years. Indeed, not a single major shift in the polls between Gore and Bush can possibly be attributed to major developments on the "issues." From Gore's kiss to Bush's pronunciation of "subliminal," undecideds have been moved from one column to the other—and back again—by events more often associated with beauty pageants than with governing. No one expects the average Joe or Jane to admit this when they are under the studio klieg lights, but it's the truth; so the press should start switching off the spotlight that's now trained, obsessively, on Joe, Jane, and their whole ignorant cohort. **NR**



The Undecided Voter by Roman Genn

■ CAPITOL HILL ■

'Tax, Spend, and Elect'

A fiscal free-for-all in Congress

STEPHEN MOORE

BACK in July, my Cato Institute colleague Steve Slivinski and I released a study warning that this Congress was on pace to be the biggest-spending Congress since the late 1970s. Our study was widely publicized, and infuriated Republicans on Capitol Hill accused us of exaggerating the budget buildup. House majority whip Tom DeLay and others insisted that the spending spree in Congress this fall would not be as financially reckless as our report predicted.

Well, they were right. The fiscal mess on Capitol Hill isn't as bad as we thought it would be: It's actually a lot worse. The Republicans are now set to approve spending bills for next year that will exceed their own spending caps by a whopping $98 billion. That's more money than we spent on the entire Gulf War.

What's even more depressing—and truly inexcusable for a party that professes fiscal conservatism—is that the GOP has managed to outspend even President Clinton's original budget request, by $20 billion. Or, to state the point more emphatically: Taxpayers would be much better off if Republicans had simply rubber-stamped every Clinton administration spending request back in February and then adjourned for the rest of the year. At the start of the year, the White House requested $620 billion for discretionary programs. The Republicans are set to approve $640 billion. *Congressional Quarterly* now reports that by the time Congress adjourns, GOP appropriators could end up spending over $650 billion.

Mr. Moore is a fellow at the Cato Institute and president of the Club for Growth.

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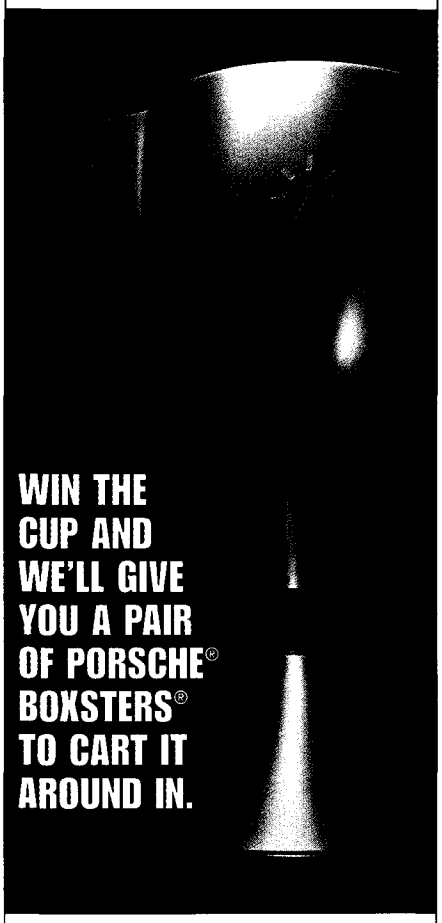

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Pick your favorite example of a worthless or counterproductive nanny-state program and I can almost assure you it's getting more money this year. The Legal Services Corporation for left-wing lawyers? Up $20 million. The NEA? Up $7 million. Amtrak? Forget privatization—Congress just gave them a $3.3 billion bailout.

No bill is uglier than the agriculture-funding legislation. The celebrated Freedom to Farm legislation of 1996 was supposed to phase out crop and dairy subsidies over five to seven years so that farmers could finally produce for the market rather than Uncle Sam. But that legislation has now been officially eviscerated. This year's $78 billion farm bill is by far the most expensive in history. Florida citrus and lime growers will get $58 million in payments; the famous wool and mohair subsidy has been resurrected, so that Vermont sheep herders will get $20 million in renewed handouts this year; apple and potato farmers get $138 million; Connecticut oystermen will get an emergency bailout; and the loan program for Florida sugar-plantation owners has been made more generous than ever. Aggrieved avocado farmers in California will now receive funds from a new tax on imported avocados. (The tax dollars generated from this tax "will be used to fund research and marketing campaigns in favor of avocado consumption.") The bill even allocates $1.6 billion over the next five years for increasing food-stamp payments, thus further eroding a key provision of the successful welfare-reform effort.

Other last-minute budget bills are also larded up with indefensible new spending. There's $20 billion for fattened Medicare subsidies, another $3.6 billion in farm emergency funding, and $6 billion extra for veterans' health-care benefits. The transportation bill pipelines an extra $75 million to Salt Lake City for the Olympic village. This brings the federal taxpayer cost of the 2002 Winter Games to $1.3 billion, and counting. Meanwhile, the $15 billion foreign-aid bill is so crammed with statist approaches to economic development that liberal Democrats like Nancy Pelosi have been boasting: "The money we are talking about can accommodate many of our needs."

In a genuinely stomach-turning development, congressional Republicans are trumpeting as one of their "accomplishments" that they will spend several hundred million more dollars for the Department of Education than Bill Clinton requested. This department's budget has grown by more than 35 percent since 1996. Many school-aid programs are faring a lot better under a Republican Congress than they did under the Democrats.

■

Republicans believe that fiscal conservatives are losing the battle because of the politics of budget surpluses.

■

There's a reason for this: Fiscal conservatives in Congress are becoming an endangered species. The National Taxpayers Union recently reported that in this Congress, only two members have voted to cut the budget more than to increase it: Republican congressmen James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin and Ron Paul of Texas. Republicans and Democrats are now sponsoring seven bills to raise federal spending for every bill they propose to cut the budget.

So why can't Republicans restrain their fiscal appetites? Almost every Capitol Hill Republican I talked to believes that fiscal conservatives are losing the battle because of the politics of budget surpluses. "For the last 20 years, the budget deficit was our one line of defense for restraint on spending," says Wayne Struble, chief of staff of John Kasich's House Budget Committee. "Now that fence is gone and there are effectively no restraints left." Rep. Joe Scarborough of Florida agrees. He remembers that when he first ran for Congress in 1994 the $200 billion budget deficit was prima facie evidence to voters that the government was too big and too intrusive. "Now," he says, "the case for cutting government just comes down to philosophy. It's a tougher sell."

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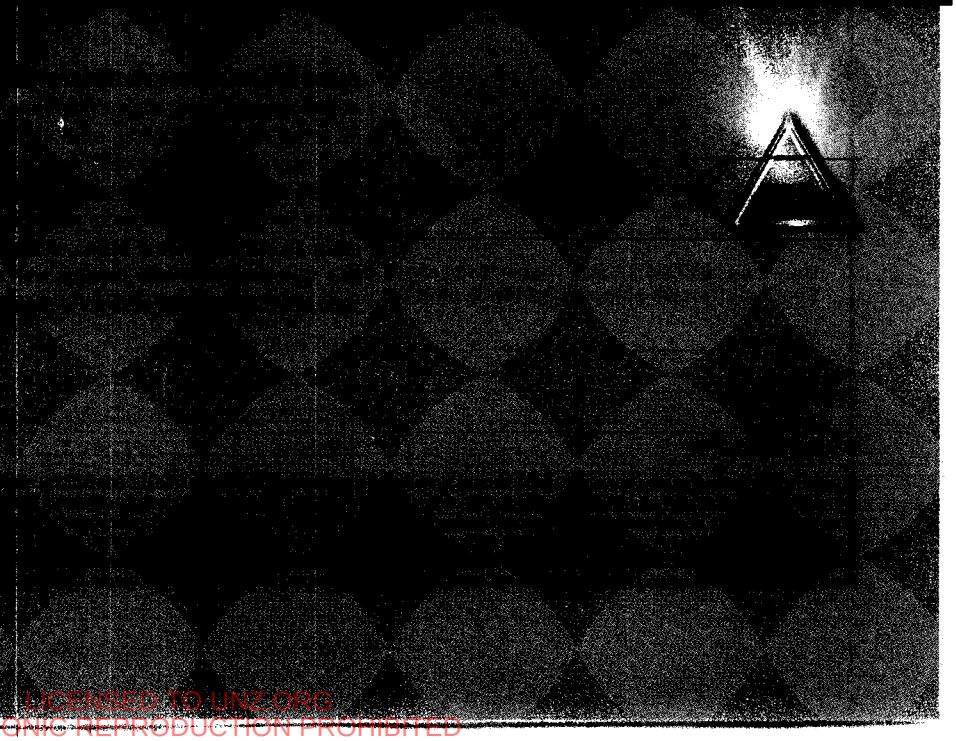

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Indeed it is. One lesson here is that if Republicans don't start hacking away at taxes, these budget surpluses are going to lead the nation into bankruptcy. So far, for every dime of tax cuts from the budget surpluses, spending has gone up by a dollar.

■

Republicans do themselves no favors when they let themselves be seen as raiders of the treasury.

■

Republicans have deluded themselves into thinking that this "tax, spend, and elect" model will guarantee them lifetime job security. They're wrong. History teaches us that Republicans who spend like Democrats are expendable to voters: They are redundant. It was precisely this kind of election-eve spending orgy that nearly cost Republicans their House majority in 1998. Conservatives were so appalled by the GOP's spending frenzy that many chose not to vote at all. The stakes are higher this year, to be sure, and many conservatives may give spendthrift Republicans a pass in order to prevent an Al Gore presidency and a Dick Gephardt speakership.

But Republicans do themselves no favors when they let themselves be seen as raiders of the treasury. From 1999 to 2001, total federal social spending will have risen *by almost 14 percent*. When I showed the study on these spending trends in Congress to my neighbor, Democratic senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, he triumphantly declared: "I keep telling you, Steve, it's the Republicans who are the big spenders these days."

It's getting harder with every passing week to rebut Dorgan's point. The GOP is being profligate, and the Democrats know how to take advantage of it: They see the Republicans and raise them. The White House has threatened to veto 7 of the 13 appropriations bills—because they are "severely underfunded." This is a game the GOP can't win. They shouldn't try. **NR**

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■ **FOREIGN AFFAIRS** ■

The Last Revolution

Milosevic falls, but is that enough?

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

We do revolutions more tidily than we used to. A million people took to the Belgrade streets, flag-waving and blowing whistles. They stormed and set fire to the parliament and the television station, but virtually nobody was hurt. Duly and properly elected, the new president, Vojislav Kostunica, opened his address to the nation with the words, "Good evening, liberated Serbia." This new president is a rather trim constitutional lawyer, and he had a record as an anti-Communist at a time when it mattered. Evidently he belongs to the human race. Away with sanctions and out with checkbooks. Democracy triumphs. What has happened in the former Yugoslavia completes the dramas of a decade ago in the old Soviet Union and its satellites, and—formally at least—it brings old-style Communism to a close in Europe.

A shadow defaces the projected happy ending, and it is the shadow of Slobodan Milosevic, who brought this revolution down on himself. With his podgy passionless features, and his tightly buttoned gray suits, he looks exactly like the veteran Communist that he is, and not quite a member of the human race. Going to war four times, he has destroyed the Yugoslavia he claimed to be saving. Tens of thousands are dead, hundreds of thousands displaced. Historic towns and monuments are flattened. During his 13 years in power, he has stolen a fortune variously estimated at between $145 million and $300 million. He has allowed his wife and son and chosen colleagues to embezzle public money on a comparable scale. His secret police have murdered his opponents. Finally,

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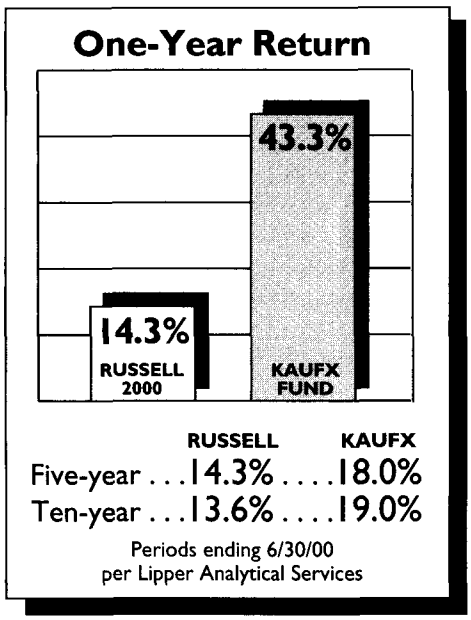

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he played every trick to try to steal the recent election.

Ten years ago, revolutions in the Soviet Union and its satellites were also the prelude to the political undertaking of making a fresh start in countries without any of the institutions of state necessary for democracy. Replacing Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin, Boris Yeltsin judged that it was enough to put his friends in power, and rule by decree. The Communist structure was co-opted rather than destroyed. Innumerable KGB bosses and Gulag officials are living on comfortable pensions, and not a single one of them has ever been put on trial. Since nobody is held responsible for Communism, those who committed crimes in its name have clearly got away with it. Russians respond accordingly, with cynicism. In the absence of elementary justice, of legally supported concepts of right and wrong, any attempt to be a moral citizen is stupid altruism, only self-damaging. Failure to bring anyone to account further encouraged the KGB to regroup: hence Vladimir Putin today.

In the overthrowing of the Soviet satellites, Communist bosses tended to fade away into limbo, and two of them had the grace to die. There were a few exceptions, however. East Germany, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia held a scattering of trials, which led to prison sentences. And in Romania—uniquely—

Slobodan Milosevic
by Roman Genn

Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena were executed summarily, with the barest legal fig leaf.

As the Belgrade revolution broke out around him, Milosevic had these precedents to guide him. Since he and his wife Mira are the equals of the Ceausescus in greed and abuse of power, he must have feared that they too would be put up against the wall. This could still happen. Unlike other Communists driven out by popular opinion, Milosevic had the further alternative of fleeing to a safe haven. Two of Saddam Hussein's top intelligence operatives flew in to facilitate escape to Iraq, but Milosevic declined. China was another possible country of exile, and so is Russia. Marko, his gangster son, is already safe in Moscow, and Milosevic could always join him there. For the time being, Milosevic has decided to brazen it out. Throughout the disturbances, he stayed quietly in his palace in a leafy suburb of Belgrade, well guarded by secret police loyal to him. He saw the Russian foreign minister, he made pronouncements on television, he let it be known that from now on he will be leading the opposition against Kostunica.

Deluded as this defiance may look, hard calculation lies behind it. A brilliant manipulator, Milosevic remains master of the levers of power. He put the whole country in the hands of the old Communist nomenklatura, with his loyalists controlling the ministries, the parliament, the big industrial concerns (including Jugopetrol, the monopoly oil company), the media and the universities, local bosses and mayors. Here is a gigantic patronage network, whose bullyboy beneficiaries are willing to resort to violence, if need be, in defense of their interests. Most crucially, Milosevic still has the senior officers of the army and the secret police in his grip. Together, they scheme their comeback.

The president of the international tribunal at The Hague asks for Milosevic to be extradited there, to stand trial as a war criminal. Madeleine Albright and assorted European politicians lend their support to the proposal. Kostunica immediately rejected any such course of action. An avowed Serb nationalist, he is not about to allow a foreign court without much standing to settle Serbian

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domestic issues. At the Hague tribunal, Milosevic would be at the mercy of victors' justice. To hand him over would also prejudice the future of Kosovo, which Kostunica will do his very best to reintegrate with Serbia.

Why then does Kostunica not take the safety-first course of arresting Milosevic, and putting him on trial in a Belgrade court? The depressing answer is that he does not believe that he has the power to do so. So far all he and his supporters have been able to achieve is to frighten some pro-Milosevic industrialists, journalists, and academics into resigning, (and, in a couple of cases, fleeing for their lives). Behind the scenes, the struggle for power is intense and highly personal.

Ousting the Communists in the August coup of 1991, Boris Yeltsin faced this same dilemma. He had the streets, but the Communists had the army and secret police. In what was his finest hour, Yeltsin went down to the Moscow White House, stood on a tank and convinced the army and secret police to defect to him. Unless and until Kostunica finds some way of emulating that feat and cajoling the army and secret police out of allegiance to Milosevic, he and his regime are in danger.

In another respect, too, Kostunica has something to learn from the example of Yeltsin. To outbid the Communist nomenklatura with bigger and better bribes, as Yeltsin did and Kostunica seems about to do, is a perpetuation of the system, not a revolution; and it has nothing to do with democracy. The rule of law—if it is to become the basis of the state—means arresting those who gave the orders for war and "ethnic cleansing," Milosevic first and foremost, and holding them responsible for their crimes. To make an example of Milosevic and at least some of his henchmen is the only way to draw a line under the past.

Mistakenly left in place by Yeltsin, the Soviet nomenklatura held on to power, transforming overnight into a gangster network so strong and interwoven that many more years will have to pass before Russian democracy is a reality. Kostunica is in the same predicament today. His Yugoslavia looks likely to be post-Communist, but a gangster state just the same. **NR**

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■ ESSAY ■

Head of the New Class

Al Gore, candidate of the intellectualized, meritocratic-educated elites

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

A GORE victory in November would, of course, have many consequences for the nation and the world. It would also, however, have a larger historical meaning—in the sense that people looking back on it 100 years hence might say: "Ah, that represented . . ."

What? What larger trend would be embodied in a Gore victory? We have all internalized the consequences of past elections. Andy Jackson—the dethroning of the old coastal gentry; Teddy Roosevelt—victory of Progressivism; FDR—dawn of the welfare state; and so on. We know roughly what a Gore victory would mean in particulars; what would it be *part of?*

I suggest that its larger significance would lie in its being a decisive triumph for the New Class—the intellectualized, tertiary-educated, meritocratic elites of the law, academia, the media, the great foundations, and government bureaucracies.

The term "new class" was first used in this precise context by Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1972, and got capital letters from Michael Novak later that same year. Some key essays on the phenomenon were gathered together in a 1979 book, *The New Class?*, edited by the historian B. Bruce-Briggs. Anyone who seeks clarification of who the New Class is and where it comes from could not do better than to track down a copy of that book (sadly, long out of print).

The New Class has been engaged in its "long march through the institutions" for 30 years, but Bill Clinton was the first of them to attain the presidency. Al Gore himself is only a sort of honorary New Class-nik, having been born to privilege rather than having acquired it through the educational system. The programs and values of the party Gore leads, however, are solidly New Class, and he has made the necessary adjustments to his personal profile.

A Gore victory would consolidate the New Class domination of the Clinton years, and make it unassailable. By his powers of appointment, Gore would make New Class values paramount in the judiciary and executive, as they already are in academia and the media.

But what are those values? What are New Class people like, in general? What do they stand for? And why should we oppose their hegemony? Permit me to enumerate.

They are liars. Bill Clinton and his wife are famously mendacious. At this point, after eight years' exposure to them, no sensible person believes anything they say. Most people suppose that this mendacity is personal and particular—that it is a failing of the Clintons, and does not represent anything larger. Even Al Gore's carelessness with the truth has been attributed to his association with the Clintons, as if it were a sort of infection.

In fact, a disdain for the truth is fundamental to New Class values, and key to their obtaining high political office in a democracy. To the extent that ordinary Americans are aware of the existence of the New Class, they dislike it. As David Gelernter has pointed out, the old elite (of privilege via family property) had one advantage over the new one (of privilege via formal education): "The old elite used to get on fairly well with the country it was set over . . . [They] approached life on basically the same terms. The public went to church and so did they. The public went into the army and so did they . . . Today's elite loathes the nation it rules."

The New Class has deep differences of opinion with the common people and therefore cannot get elected without a certain amount of deceit. The American public is, for example, religious; the New Class is atheist. (Peter Berger expressed it very elegantly: The people of the U.S. are as religious as those of India, but they are ruled over by an elite as irreligious as Swedes.) Thus New Class candidates for power must make a show of piety. At critical points in his various personal dramas, President Clinton has taken care to be seen coming out of church clutching a Bible.

Bill Clinton and Al Gore actually represent two different strategies of deception. The Clinton technique is simply to lie and intimidate one's way across the gap—as Clinton did in the matter of his draft-dodging and philandering. The Gore candidacy represents another approach: the conscripting of a member of the old elite, with sufficient old-elite attributes (fidelity, military service) to bridge the gap, and to use him as a front man for further New Class advance. This strategy is having its first trial with the Gore campaign, and may not work. The strains it imposes on the candidate's personality are extreme, and cause peculiar deformations, which voters may find unappealing. The lesson of the Clinton-Gore candidacies may ultimately be the one taught by another national leader in another time: If you're going to lie, lie big.

They are self-righteous. One of the first sightings of the New Class in politics was Michael Harrington's mention of the

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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Are You an Ostrich-Catholic ?

In the April 2, 2000 *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national Catholic paper, its Editor in Chief condemned what he called the "smears" and "slanders" directed at Catholic priests, and his case-in-point was the now-famous *Kansas City Star* study on homosexuality and AIDS in the priesthood, the verdict of which was: "it appears that priests are dying of AIDS at a rate at least four times that of the general U.S. population...."

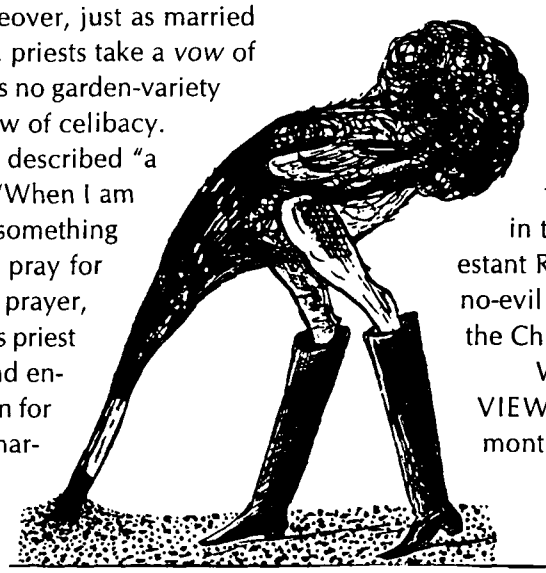
The Editor in Chief, a layman, allowed that some priests are "troubled and troubling," but added, "Is this so unusual?... If sin is no stranger to us, why do we expect it to be a stranger to our priests?" Fine. But we do expect our priests to be *models* of Catholic morality — don't we? Moreover, just as married couples take a *vow* of fidelity, priests take a *vow* of celibacy, and just as adultery is no garden-variety sin, neither is violating the vow of celibacy.

The Editor in Chief then described "a new ritual" he's worked out: "When I am wont to criticize a priest for something he has done or failed to do, I pray for him instead." Yes, we all need prayer, but let's say the Editor in Chief's priest has the kneelers ripped out and endorses pre-marital sex, abortion for teenage girls, and same-sex "marriage." Just pray? Or let's say the Editor in Chief's acolyte son is sodomized in the sacristy or his penitent daughter is raped in the Reconciliation Room. Just pray?

New Covenant is a Catholic spirituality magazine. In its July 1997 issue, its Editor, a layman, informed his readers of a "resolution" he made: "I will not criticize the clergy," adding "I'll extend that promise to others in the Church." Turning a blind eye to immorality, dissent, and heresy — what kind of spirituality is *this*?

Alas, granting priests immunity from criticism is all too common in the Church today, and it involves a misplaced piety. While the *office* of the priesthood is above criticism, priests who drag the nobility of their calling through the mud are *not*. Indeed, it's an unconscionable injustice to the office to let them get away with their odious words or deeds.

Imagine if all Catholics were silent about abuse and treachery. Why, sexual predators in the priesthood would never have been exposed and would still be mutilating the lives and even destroying the faith of fellow Catholics. And dissenters and heretics, who already control many Catholic institutions, would have virtually free rein.



It was the unwillingness to face and deal with the corruption in the Church that gave us the Protestant Reformation, and, sadly, this see-no-evil mentality is once again plaguing the Church.

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"conscience constituency" that rallied to the presidential candidacy of Eugene McCarthy in 1968. A firm certainty of its own superior virtue, and a corresponding contempt for other, especially older, moralities, has been a New Class trait from the beginning. As P. J. O'Rourke noted more pithily, watching the Clinton crowd sweep into Washington in 1993, they were "stuffed up to the nose-holes with a conviction of their own righteousness." Norman Podhoretz pinned this quality down in his discussion of a quintessentially New Class novelist: "The authorial point of view in the work of Philip Roth claims for itself a singular sensitivity to things of the spirit . . . whereas others are represented as altogether blind to things of the spirit and as caring only for lesser things of the flesh like food and money and material possessions."

Hence the endless sappy litany of New Class politicians and media types: *We CARE, we're for the people, for the kiddies and the old folk, for the environment—the birds and little fishes. But you—you just want to strip the country bare and trample on the faces of the poor, to enrich yourselves and your friends and gratify your base appetites for worldly goods.*

In spite of which . . .

They are hedonists. "*Fay ce que voudras*" (do what thou wilt) was the motto of the 18th-century Hell Fire Club, in which rakes and libertines came together to practice debauchery. (Benjamin Franklin seems to have been a member.) It is now the slogan of New Class morality. The question: "Why should I not do as I please within the law, so long as I harm no one else?" would, at all earlier times, have drawn one or both of the answers: "Because it offends God" or "Because you will become a social outcast."

The first of these has no force for our new elites, who do not believe in God; the second is not only without force for them, it is without meaning. To exclude a person from one's drawing-room because his personal pleasures are aberrant would be "discrimination." Larry Flynt is a member of the Clinton team, and nobody—nobody in elite circles—thinks any the worse of the Clintons for it. Why should they? To the New Class, "high society," if it means anything, means Hollywood, the world capital of hedonism. I recently discovered, by chance, that the plot of *La Traviata* is now incomprehensible to intelligent, well-educated 18-year-olds.

They hate the past. Malcolm Muggeridge remarked of his friend George Orwell that "he loved the past, hated the present, and dreaded the future." New Class types are counter-Orwells: They hate the past, love the present, and look with joyful anticipation to a future that only they can see clearly, and that therefore only they can be trusted to bring about. The past is a vile, horrible place; a place in which blacks were enslaved and Indians massacred, women were passive, unenfranchised baby-producing machines, and corrupt priests manipulated the ignorant masses by filling their heads with absurd fears about sin and its wages in an imaginary afterlife. The present is certainly an improvement, but there is still much to be done. In the future we shall dwell in an earthly paradise, all prejudice, all conflict, all differences, all fear and sorrow purged from our condition. We shall live in a state of undistracted Reason, like Swift's Houyhnhnms, whose aim—to come back round to Orwell, in his essay on *Gulliver's Travels*—was "to be as like a corpse as is possible while retaining physical life."

They hate masculinity. The great masculine enthusiasms—hunting, sexual conquest, adventure, history, mathematics, poetry, war—are not popular with the New Class. This may seem an odd thing to say when the current exemplar of New Class values is an exceptionally busy fornicator. However, I think most people understand that Bill Clinton is not a manly man, and that his liaisons have much less to do with conquest than with New Class droit du seigneur. I have an acquaintance who works for the Port Authority police here in New York. He has done duty at the P.A.'s helicopter landing pad for three presidents. He remarked to me once: "When Reagan walked past, the bristles stood up on the back of my neck. That man was every inch a president. He *radiated* leadership. But this one? All the guys laugh at him behind his back, and mimic his sloppy salute."

There is a strong tendency in our culture, encouraged by New Class educators and psychologists, to regard masculine traits as undesirable. The London *Spectator* recently ran an article about children with "special educational needs." When the writer asked an educator what particular characteristics these pupils exhibited, she answered: "They often shouted out in class, pushed to the front of the classroom and were very physical in the playground." In short, they were boys—as indeed, on further inquiry, all the "special educational needs" kids in that coeducational school turned out to be!

They hate commerce. Hillary Clinton's remark, during the promotion of her health-care plan, that "I can't go out and save every undercapitalized entrepreneur in America," revealed the true mindset of New Class types towards entrepreneurship. Commerce can be tolerated, especially if those who practice it are willing to accommodate themselves, via bribes or rigged transactions in the securities markets, to New Class appetites. Ultimately, however, as economist Joseph Schumpeter pointed out, a powerful bureaucratic class is in the same relation to commerce as was the scorpion in Aesop to the dog on whose back he crossed the river. They will destroy commerce and establish socialism, even if it kills them, because that is their nature. Listen to Al Gore rail against the drug companies and Big Oil. The "taming" of these industries—that is, their reduction to licensees of the state—will not, of course, be the end of his industrial program, only the beginning.

They are bullies and cowards, snobs and narcissists. They are shallow and obscurantist, racist and sentimentalist, fiscally irresponsible and haters of the nation-state, religion, democracy, and science. Any reader who has had much to do with the New Class can supply copious evidence for each of these accusations, and for many others that will come to mind. The point is made: Our nation and our liberties are under assault by an arrogant, self-satisfied elite of overeducated libertines. Al Gore, though not exactly of them, carries their standard into battle, and his victory would cement their capture of our institutions.

It is not just his particular policies, or any personal failings we may have detected in him, that make it essential for us to oppose Gore. He must be defeated because his victory would represent the final, decisive triumph of the New Class. Class-warfare politics? Oh, yes, please! **NR**

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Incurable Romantic

Why Gore glorifies public power

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

WHEN told that George Washington would most likely retire to his Virginia farm if he succeeded in leading his fellow Americans to independence, King George III is supposed to have replied, "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world."

The art of gaining power is something we know a lot about; there are countless manuals on the subject. But the art of *refusing* power—resisting the temptation to exercise it—is much less understood. To forsake an opportunity to wield power: The very idea is as George III suggested, novel, strange, sublime.

In 1783, Washington resigned as commander in chief of the American army; 17 years later, he retired after two terms as president. This year, President Clinton took a different approach. In the twilight of his presidency, he declined to fade gracefully from the scene, launching instead a series of trips, fundraisers, policy initiatives, and—most breathtaking of all—a full-dress summit between Israel and the Palestinian leadership at Camp David. Clinton's own authority was waning (and with it his ability to help a summit succeed) when he brought the two sides together in July and pressured them with various improbable deadlines to reach an agreement. The president's desire for glory (prosaically described today as his desire to leave a "legacy") overcame any doubts he might have had about the speed with which he was moving or the efficacy of his lame-duck authority. The knowledge that some of the players involved in the negotiations would inevitably see in the present master of Camp David the soon-to-be private citizen of Chappaqua only strengthened the gambler's willingness to hazard the fortunes of nations on a last desperate attempt to obtain a prize (preferably the Nobel) for himself.

REUTERS/Jim Bourg

'A handsome and enlightened tribune of the plebs.'

Clinton's inability to resist an opportunity to exercise his authority, his willingness to squander American reserves of credibility at so late an hour in his presidency, is characteristic of the man; the president makes no secret of his appetite for power. He would like nothing more, he has said, than to have another term of office. Power, for Clinton, is fun; he delights in its exercise. Not long after Barak became prime minister of Israel, Clinton said he felt like a kid about to get a new toy. The president believed (mistakenly, it turns out) that the Israeli leader's elevation offered him a new opportunity to demonstrate the virtuosity with which he exercises power.

We are very far, here, from Washington's renunciations. The astonishing spectacle of a sitting president lamenting that his enemies deprived him of his chance to be a great man of history is a reminder that we are closer, with Clinton, to a modern parody of some more purely Romantic ideal than we are to the sobriety of Washington and the virtues of 18th-century Federalism. The president reprises, in his own opéra bouffe style, Plutarch's youthful Caesar, weeping at his failure to match Alexander's greatness; like Bonaparte on Elba, he plots a way to take back history with a final show of power.

This Romantic insolence is not limited to Clinton, although he may be its most perfect contemporary expression. The civil union between a Romantic exaltation of public power and the policies of the Democratic party—a union over which FDR presided—continues to exercise a corrupting influence on the hearts of the party's tribunes. Not even the most fervent New Democrat rhetoric has succeeded in exorcising the Democrats' Romantic ghosts.

ROMANCING AL GORE

In a presidential campaign voters ask themselves whether a candidate is competent enough to wield executive power. They should also ask themselves whether a candidate is balanced enough to know when *not* to use it. Al Gore, so apparently different from Clinton in many personal qualities, resembles him in this respect: He is in love with the idea of public power. His policy proposals glorify it; they are reminiscent of the health-care and spending initiatives of the early days of the Clinton administration, before Republican Congresses restrained its ambitions. The vice president wants 100,000 new teachers—and an unreformed public-school system. He wants a "lockbox" to help preserve Social Security in all its antiquated New Deal splendor—and refuses to countenance the idea of private investment accounts. He wants to create new health-care entitlements—and cribs from Huey Long's demagoguery to criticize meaningful tax relief.

It is curious that Gore, a famously earnest student of public policy, should have put forward campaign proposals that give no evidence that he has learned any of the important

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policy lessons of the last century. Surely this self-proclaimed New Democrat knows the arguments—that governments can never have as much information about the circumstances in which particular people find themselves as the people themselves do; that often the wisest choice a politician can make is to resist the temptation to solve a problem through short-sighted state action. No politician, of course, can resist every temptation to use government power to solve problems better left to private individuals; what is troubling about Gore's proposals is that he seems not even to *try* to resist the temptation. On a broad range of issues, from teachers unions' monopolies on education to 1930s-style pension planning, Gore opts for the most government-directed solution.

It may be that Gore is simply trying to win votes, and that if elected he will show himself capable of resisting the temptation to solve hot-button problems with the quick application of federal power. But certain facets of his life and career give one pause. Gore's father, Albert Gore Sr., was already a relic at the time he lost his Senate seat in 1970, a standard-bearer for an outmoded, Bryan-style populism; he wanted his only son to carry forward his populist themes by transcribing them into what the elder Gore called a new "future-oriented" key. The dutiful son ended up becoming the technocratic futurist his father wanted him to be. Gore Jr., for his part, appears somewhat vain of his visionary gifts; there is in his public pronouncements a strain of prophetic arrogance that does not presage a restrained and cautious approach to the exercise of power. The author of *Earth in the Balance* has seen the future, and he will tell us how it will work.

More ominously, Gore, in spite of his dull and uninspiring public manner, appears to cherish a romantic ideal of himself as a fighter, a dashing champion of the People (now called "working families"). The would-be alpha male, the Clark Gable convention-night kisser, the Byronic pretty-boy who was said to be the model for the preppy swain in Erich Segal's *Love Story*: Gore is at some level fascinated by the figure of the Romantic hero, a figure whom he does not naturally resemble, but one whom he deludes himself into believing that, with a little practice, he *can* resemble.

It is this Romantic faith—Gore's conception of himself as a handsome and enlightened tribune of the plebs—that helps to explain his affinity for *The Red and the Black*, the Stendhal novel he recently proclaimed his favorite book. Julien Sorel, the hero of the novel, with his brilliance and his boldness, his "large dark eyes" and "reflective, fiery spirit," has been carried away, Stendhal writes, "by his own imagination, which dreamed of distinctions for himself and of liberty for mankind." Julien, the worshipper of Bonaparte and the heroes of the French Revolution, is a deeply weird figure who learns how to make love to his first mistress by studying Napoleon's offhand comments about women and "the novels in vogue during his reign." Like the figure of Cromwell in Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Julien, with his strange mixture of morbidity and passion, is an artist *manqué*, possessed of the mad-genius sensibility of the poet and prophet. He embodies the ideal of a certain kind of Romantic hero, one whose attitude towards power is a reflection of his own exalted soul.

FEDERALISM VERSUS ROMANTICISM

The Oxford thinker Isaiah Berlin noted that, for all the silliness of Romantic rhetoric, the ideal that Romantics like Stendhal's Julien cherished—the ideal of the superior man who through a creative use of power shapes the destiny of a nation—had devastating consequences when 20th-century leaders attempted to act out the fantasy. "As the artist blends colours and the composer sounds," Berlin wrote, so the 20th-century "political demiurge imposes his will upon his raw material—average, ungifted human beings, largely unconscious of the possibilities dormant within them—and shapes them into a splendid work of art—a state or an army, or some great political, military, religious, juridical structure."

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Gore's devotion to public power and personal glory would compromise his ability to exercise self-discipline in the White House.

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America experienced only a mild strain of the Romantic virus that infected Germany, Russia, and China with such virulence. But even here, Romantic notions of political creativity persist: In *The New Yorker*, Hendrik Hertzberg invoked Nietzsche's distinction between Apollo and Dionysus to explain Bill Clinton's "unheralded perseverance and political skill" in creating a new "political space" in America. The notion of Bill Clinton as Tragic Artist, part Apollonian seer, part Dionysian wild man, lovingly remaking our "public space" may sound like mere fatuous punditry; but, like Al Gore's identification with *The Red and the Black*, Hertzberg's effort demonstrates that the tendency to glorify public power—and the figures who use it with a supposedly artistic creativity—lives on.

Whatever Bill Clinton might be, Al Gore is no artist. The prose stylist who produced *Earth in the Balance* is unlikely to cause Stendhal to tremble for his fame. But Gore's devotion to public power and personal glory would compromise his ability to exercise self-discipline in the White House. The safeguards of the American constitutional system would limit the damage that the infatuated votary of Stendhal and Lyndon Johnson can do. But they wouldn't entirely stop him.

In a curious irony, Yugoslavia recently elected as president a man who translated the *Federalist Papers*—a series of essays in political restraint—into his own language, while America itself may well elect a man who gives no sign of having learned the *Federalist*'s lessons. Presidents, of course, need to be able to act, and act decisively. (The *Federalist* plea for "energy in the executive.") But they also need to know when to refrain from acting. Over the years, the disciplined economy of power implicit in federalism—with its insistence on the importance of limiting power, divesting it of enchantment—has been corrupted by a Romantic notion of leadership that celebrates the ability of the visionary leader to transform the world through a joyous application of the authority of the state. Advocates of the more sober federalist approach to power should not have much difficulty deciding how to vote this November. **NR**

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We're Number One (Percent)

What's right about the rich . . .

ALAN REYNOLDS

VICE PRESIDENT GORE has complained that Gov. Bush would use more of our surplus on tax cuts for the top 1 percent than for new spending programs. But when it comes to the top 1 percent, a big chunk of the surplus is not "our" money but *theirs*; after all, the top 1 percent pays a third of all income taxes, and would pay an even larger proportion under the Bush plan.

Who are Gore's "wealthiest 1 percent," anyway? It turns out he was using dubious estimates of income from an outfit called Citizens for Tax Justice, notorious zealots for soak-the-rich taxation. The census actually provides income figures only for the top 5 percent. For the top 1 percent, the only official figures come from Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT). The JCT defines the top 1 percent as everyone with cash income, taxable capital gains, and employee benefits adding up to more than $296,828 per year.

The JCT calculates that the top 1 percent earns 15.4 percent of all income, but pays a whopping 33.6 percent of all income tax. Since they pay a third of all income taxes, but receive less than a fourth of the income-tax cut proposed by Gov. Bush, it's undeniable that the Bush plan is tilted toward those with more modest incomes. These facts annoyed Al Hunt of the *Wall Street Journal*, who titled a recent column "The Biggest Whopper: The Bush Tax Cut." Hunt snarls at the "formerly nonpartisan" JCT, and prefers to rely on a five-page "study" from Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ). He finds the blatant bias of this notorious left-wing advocacy group "irrelevant," because he accepts their contention that they use "an accepted standard model" from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. In fact, that institute is merely an appendage of the CTJ, sharing the same address. Al Gore relied on these same fabricated figures in the first debate.

Hunt goes on to echo the CTJ's claim that "91% of the benefits of the estate tax cut would go to the top 1%, as would 42% of the overall reductions." This comment inadvertently reveals that the Gore-CTJ complaint is not really about Bush's reduction of income-tax rates at all, *but about the estate tax*. Even the CTJ itself claims only that 26 percent of all Bush *income*-tax cuts would go to the top 1 percent, and that figure was itself boosted by including relief from the marriage penalty. Easing the brutal taxation of second earners is indeed beneficial to families with high incomes, because most get high incomes by having two salaries.

The CTJ's pretense that over 40 percent of the Bush tax cuts are "targeted to the top 1 percent" is based *entirely* on the doubtful suppositions that ending the estate tax would cost a lot of federal revenue, and that 91 percent of the benefits would go to the top 1 percent. But many people have already figured out how to avoid the estate tax; and the "benefits" of cutting it are not actually enjoyed by those who have died (of whom many might be in the top 1 percent of earners) but by their younger heirs (of whom very few are in the top 1 percent).

THEY'RE TOPS—IN EDUCATION, WORK, AND MATURITY

What kind of people are the top 1 percent? The Census Bureau does not give us a direct statistical answer; the closest it offers is fascinating information about the top 5 percent. In 1998, the latter group included nearly 3.6 million families who earned more than $145,199. Here is a quick portrait of these "rich" families, and how they got that way:

- Ninety-six percent were married.
- Ninety-five percent received some of their income from saving and investing.
- Ninety-three percent were still collecting salaries; on average, more than 2.1 family members worked.
- Seventy-one percent had at least a bachelor's degree; 36 percent had advanced degrees.
- Sixty-four percent were over age 45; the average age was above 49.

There is little reason to suppose that the top 1 percent is much different from the top 5 percent: That is, they are unusually hard-working, well-educated married people who are getting older and have taken care to save and invest. The top 1 percent does, of course, include quite a few famous entertainers, athletes, CEOs, politicians (e.g., the Clintons), and journalists. Al Hunt and his wife, Judy Woodruff, are surely among the top 1 percent, as are many other hardworking and talented two-earner families. Al Gore's solo income of $240,930 in 1999 was only slightly below the top 1 percent. But few members of the top 1 percent are famous, since the group includes more than a million households.

Why are these people so wealthy? The Census Bureau provides detailed information about five income groups, ranging from the top 20 percent to the bottom 20 percent, and these statistics suggest three main reasons why some families earn more than others, and why some make it to the top 1 percent.

First, *families with two workers earn more than those with no workers*. In 1999, median income among family heads who worked full-time all year was $58,502. Among families with two earners, median income was $74,711—enough to put half of all two-earner families in the highest fifth of the income distribution. Among families in which the household head worked part-time for less than half the year, by contrast, median income was only $32,821. But that was not nearly low enough to be counted among the lowest

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fifth (those earning less than $21,600). Among families in the lowest fifth, 47 percent had no family member who worked at all during the year, and another 28 percent had members who worked only part-time and/or part-year. Those in the top fifth work many more hours than those in the bottom fifth.

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Nearly everything you read and hear about the 'inequitable' U.S. income distribution involves artful statistical chicanery.

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Second, *young, inexperienced employees earn much less than they will after a couple of decades of raises and promotions.* In 1999, median income was only $24,031 for household heads younger than 25, but $65,303 for those aged 45 to 54. Above age 75, income drops back to $28,638. All the inflamed rhetoric about rich and poor is mainly about the same people at different stages in their lives. A Brookings Institution book, *Who Bears the Lifetime Tax Burden?*, by Don Fullerton and Diane Lim Rogers, reports that "13.8 percent of the annually poor are lifetime rich and 2.6 percent of the annually rich are lifetime poor." Life is a moving picture; annual income is merely a snapshot.

Third, *people who invest many years and dollars in a college education eventually earn more than high-school dropouts.* Median income was $23,668 among those over age 25 with less than a ninth-grade education, $42,995 among high-school graduates, and $100,000 for those with a doctoral degree. Yet age trumps even education. Median income among male college graduates younger than 25 was only $24,498 in March 1999—while high-school grads aged 45 to 54 were earning $38,340.

MORE FAMILIES ARE GETTING RICHER

Professional egalitarians, including wealthy politicians and journalists, always insinuate that there is something terribly unfair about these "income gaps," even though most of the income differences are clearly determined by the number of workers in a family, their experience, and their education. Proponents of income-leveling schemes also complain that "income gaps" between two-earner and zero-earner families have grown wider over time; but this is an inevitable effect of rising real wages. There are 2.2 workers per family among the top 20 or top 5 percent, while the average number of even part-time workers in the bottom fifth is fewer than one (0.8). If real wages rise, the two-earner families in the top fifth are mathematically certain to have faster income gains than families in the bottom fifth, where full-time workers are rare.

Another reason "average" income always seems to be growing faster at the top is that the top 5 or 20 percent is the only income group with *no ceiling*. When a family's income increases from $20,000 to $25,000, that can't improve "average income" among the bottom fifth, because that family now earns too much to be included in the bottom group. But the percentage of families earning more than $75,000 in constant dollars has risen steadily, from 12 percent in 1980 to 18.4 percent in 1997, and that means the amount needed to be counted among the top 5 percent has been pushed upward from $92,000 in 1988 to more than $145,000 in 1998. If you average all income above $145,000, you are sure to come up with a larger figure than the average of all income above $92,000. Raising the bar that delineates top income groups makes it *appear* as though income is rising very rapidly within an unchanged group, but that is largely a statistical illusion. Because any top income group has no ceiling, a few huge incomes can also grossly exaggerate the average at the top.

In short, nearly everything you read and hear about the "inequitable" U.S. income distribution involves artful statistical chicanery. Even many scholars seem to tolerate bad numbers in pursuit of good objectives. Their goal is to promote higher taxes on the top incomes and lavish taxpayer-financed gifts for the bottom. Ironically, however, adopting redistributionist policies would have no direct impact on the statistics. Taxing those who work and save, and giving noncash benefits to those who do neither, has virtually no direct effect on the usual measures of income distribution, which ignore taxes and exclude in-kind benefits such as Medicaid, food stamps, and even cash from the Earned Income Tax Credit. Attempted redistribution does, however, have destructive economic and ethical consequences: Punitive marginal tax rates at the top and generous transfer payments at the bottom both have the effect of discouraging personal effort, learning, marital stability, and frugality.

Gore's efforts to demonize "the rich and powerful"—and the top 1 percent in particular—have made this the most distasteful presidential campaign since 1972. But remember: It didn't work for McGovern. **NR**

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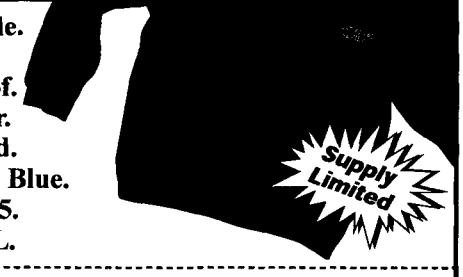

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Always with Us

. . . and wrong about the poor

RICHARD NADLER

CONSERVATIVES are often accused of insensitivity to the plight of the poor. This stereotype of conservatism is invoked to divert attention from some basic truths about the poor. Voluntary self-destructive behaviors—such as sloth, criminality, substance abuse, and sexual promiscuity—contribute significantly to poverty in America. And unimpeded markets help people help themselves, by rewarding hard work, lawfulness, sobriety, and sexual restraint.

Conservatives have held these views for a very long time. King Solomon wrote, "Go to the ant; study its ways and learn. Without leaders, officers, or rulers, it lays up its stores during the summer and gathers in its food at the harvest."

The poor are always with us. But in America, they are not with us for long—because the Solomonic approach to fighting poverty has worked. Our system of freedom has facilitated a level of social mobility unparalleled in human history. During the 1980s, roughly 20 percent of earners in the lowest income quintile moved up each year. In 1992, the Urban Institute found that half of the lowest earners in the 1967–76 period had risen at least one quintile by the 1977–1986 period.

The Department of Commerce recently examined how social mobility affects the poor. Applying standard federal income criteria to Census Bureau statistics for 1993 and 1994, author Mary Naifeh determined that the annual poverty rate in those two years averaged slightly under 13 percent, but that the percentage of people in "chronic poverty" for the entire 24 months was only 5.3 percent.

Naifeh also found that a quarter of those classed as poverty-stricken in the first year ceased to be so in the next. "About 7.6 million individuals who were poor in 1993 became non-poor in 1994," she wrote, "an exit rate of 23.8 percent."

Yes, the poor are always with us; but in America, they aren't necessarily poor. In 1995, 70 percent of impoverished households owned a car (27 percent had two or more); 97 percent owned a color TV; two-thirds, an air-conditioner; and 64 percent, a microwave oven.

Forty-one percent were homeowners. Only 3 percent of poor households reported frequent hunger, while 7.5 percent complained of overcrowding.

"Poor persons," wrote Heritage Foundation analyst Robert Rector, "are more likely to be overweight than are middle-class persons. Nearly half of poor adult women are overweight."

The U.S. Census Bureau classes as poor many individuals who don't lack food, shelter, or clothing. The expenditures of the American poor are roughly twice their reported income. In part, this reflects the failure of the Census Bureau to survey the value of in-kind benefits provided by the various levels of government; in part, it reflects the proclivity of some poor people to lie about income.

But the widespread misclassification of nonpoor households is caused, at least in part, by the desire among welfare advocates to extend poverty programs to the other groups. Using income, rather than family assets, as a determinative criterion qualifies some college students, as well as many non-poor seniors, for benefits. "Many [seniors] have low expenses, and may have substantial assets," reports policy analyst Bruce Bartlett.

But many of the poor are neither victims of temporary misfortune nor beneficiaries of legal misclassification. The poor are always with us, as is sin; and many of America's chronic poor receive poverty as an advance on the wages of sin.

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In America, the poor are not with us for long—because the Solomonic approach to fighting poverty has worked.

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One great way to be poor in America is to commit a crime. True, most sociopaths do not choose poverty. Incarceration is a remarkable drag on wages, and it also cramps whatever lifestyle caused it. But as King Solomon said, "The way of the wicked is all darkness; they do not know what will make them stumble."

Today, there are nearly 2 million Americans in jail. If you are an adult career criminal, chances are you've been caught; the prison population has sextupled since 1978, and in 1999, violent crime fell to its lowest rate in more than two decades. Conviction for a crime of violence earns you an average sentence of 91 months from a U.S. District Court; a weapons offense, 99 months; larceny, 22 months; fraud, 21; embezzlement, 16; and forgery, 13.

In federal courts, drug offenders are sentenced to an average of 78 months. Drug offenses account for a majority of federal incarcerations. (More than 90 percent of these jailings are for trafficking and manufacture—not mere possession, as our libertarian friends would have it.)

Substance abuse provides another major path to poverty. "In the end, it bites like a snake," said King Solomon. "It spits like a basilisk; your eyes will see strange sights; your heart will speak distorted things." Drug lust has effects all the way up and down the generational ladder. The 1.4 million incarcerated adults with a history of drug use have 2.4 million children who suffer from their, well, decline in earning power. Thirty-two percent of state prisoners had parents who used drugs regularly. Roughly half of all state

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prisoners, both violent criminals and property felons, were stoned during the commission of their crimes. In the Department of Justice's 1999 Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program, over 60 percent of arrestees tested toxic.

Another terrific path to poverty is unmarried sex in all its forms—premarital, adulterous, and in cohabitation. ("Can a man rake embers into his bosom without burning his clothes?" asks Solomon.) Teen sex is associated with poverty indirectly, as an predictor of low school performance, substance abuse, high-school noncompletion, crisis pregnancy, and welfare dependency. Each of these, in turn, increases a young person's prospects of penury. But among adults, the correlation to poverty is even more directly evident. Chronic poverty among cohabiting-adult families is almost four times more common than among married-adult families—8.2 percent to 2.1 percent—and 17.8 percent of families with a female head of household are chronically impoverished. Children in cohabiting-adult families are five times likelier to be poor than their counterparts in married-couple families.

"Let your fountain be blessed; find joy in the wife of your youth," recommends Solomon. The wisest thing men and women do to avert poverty is to marry in early adulthood, and stay hitched. In their 20s and 30s, married men earn 10 to 15 percent more than their single counterparts; those between 55 and 64 earn between 20 and 32 percent more than singles of the same age. Married women also enjoy a wage premium over their unmarried counterparts, albeit a smaller one.

But the most significant wealth effects of marriage are not on income, but on asset accumulation. Married adults enjoy a median per capita net worth of $65,000 apiece—almost twice the $35,000 net worth of never-married individuals. "On the verge of retirement," write Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher in *The Case for Marriage*, "the typical married couple had accumulated about $410,000 (or $205,000 for each), compared to about $167,000 for the never-married, just under $154,000 for the divorced, about $151,000 for the widowed, and just under $96,000 for the separated."

So another good way to become poor in America is to do the opposite of what Solomon recommended: to get divorced, especially if you have young children. A 1996 study reported that single-mother households with children aged six years or less had a 59 percent chance of descending into destitution. This form of poverty tends to be deeper, and last longer, than other types.

Nontraditional families also hurt the material well-being of older children. According to a study by sociologists Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, poverty among black teens occurred twice as often in single-parent families as in intact families. White teen children of single parents experienced three times the married-family poverty rate.

A free economy—and the habits it requires—is the key to ending poverty. In her study of social mobility among the underclass in 1993 and 1994, Mary Naifeh found that while 6.9 million individuals had entered poverty, 7.6 million had exited it. Since 1995, unemployment has declined from 5.6 percent to 3.9 percent. Welfare reform has restructured the work habits of many poor people. Caseloads declined by 37 percent from June 1995 to June 1998, as nearly 1.75 million families left the rolls. Contrary to the liberals' dire forecasts, child poverty recently reached its lowest level since 1980. And families in state programs that stressed immediate work earned $500 to $1,600 more per year than families in states that emphasized job training or education as a propaedeutic to work.

"Negligent hands cause poverty," said King Solomon, "but diligent hands enrich. He who lays in stores during the summer is a capable son, but he who sleeps during the harvest is an incompetent." **NR**

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Dear Rusty:

This election is about priorities. This election is about taking care of our nation's elderly, giving young people a chance to go to college, and investing in the future of America's families.

How's that? I'm pretty sure I've got the dosage right on the mood elevators. Last week I was playing around with the inhibitors—you know, trying to reduce the sighs and the interruptions and the nasty facial contortions—and I think going to 350 mg of inhibitor somehow depressed the elevators, leaving me at the mercy of the anti-oxidants.

Talk about prescription-drug bills! I need the federal government's help!

Ha ha. Just kidding. (Not really.)

And then the voices screaming in my head simply would not shut up. They're up there in my head all day, fighting it out like rats in a coffee can. Go negative. Stay positive. Go left. Head right. I was the first man to walk on the surface of the moon.

See there? The inhibitors and the elevators aren't getting along in that chemical cocktail we call my brain, and it all goes loopy. What I need is a low-level tranquilizer or a relaxant—nothing serious, some Darvon, maybe, or a half-tab of Valium, just to kind of smooth out the highs of the elevators and the lows of the inhibitors. Then maybe I'll be able to show America what a know-nothing little smirking punk—

Man, I need that Darvon. You know what, Rusty? The era of big government is over. We need safe schools and safe streets and just one more tablet of Loftil, to help me control the head jerks and lip spasms.

How can people buy his I'm-a-nice-guy act? Are the American people stupid? How can they be? I've been talking to them so slowly for the past eight years, you'd think they'd have picked up something. You'd think, wouldn't you? You know what they need? They need medication.

Ha ha. Just kidding.

Not really.

Al

Hey, Pop!

Great news, Dad. Just shot a 38 on the front nine. It was birdie city out there for the first three, then heading into the fourth—you know, the short par-three over the water? the one that always kicks your butt?—made it to the green in one! Holed it in two! And I knew it was going to be a great day.

Also, this morning, having java with Laura-boom-dee-ay, they were showing the old-style Bugs Bunnies—the kind with Elmer Fudd and stuff—and I was sitting there howling and howling and I almost spilled coffee on LB. And she was all "watch it with the coffee" and I was all laughing and stuff.

Did you see any of that show, "Survivor"? What was the deal with that thing, anyway? They were on some kind of contest? Never got it, to be honest.

The girls are doing great, by the way. Got a few calls in last week—you know how it is, they're busy, I'm busy—but they seem to be settling in okay. LB is a little tired, but she's rallying big time. Gotta hand it to her. Gotta hand it to her on a silver platter.

Question: How come we don't have enough oilers to refuel our own ships out there in the Gulf or wherever? Was that a "you" thing or a "them" thing? Lemme know when you get a sec. Working on some stuff down here.

Anyways . . .

The ranch is doing great, by the way. Got half of it done, the rest maybe in December, when things ice off a bit, workwise. Got a big old window looking out to the hill and a couple of ice makers in the garage chugging away for LB's iced tea. And I'm not sure about the garage door, whether to go with the solid door that just sort of swings up in one piece, or the rolling kind that's all in flexible pieces. Good and bad on both sides, I guess.

Last question: What about rejiggering the current IMF/World Bank configuration to include partnerships with local businesses that conform to GAAP?

Well, Dad, gotta go.

Love to mom and everything.

D.W.

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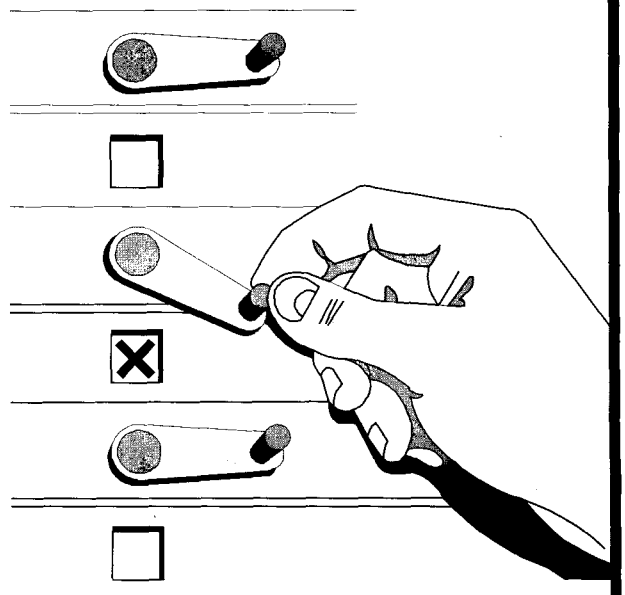
On November 7, millions won't be allowed to vote!

Suffrage, the bedrock of the Constitution, is being eroded in the name of the War on Drugs.



- *There are nearly four million persons currently or permanently disenfranchised as a result of laws that take away the voting rights of felons and ex-felons.*
- *No other democracy besides the U.S. disenfranchises convicted offenders for life. Many democratic nations, including Denmark, France, Israel, and Poland, permit prisoners to vote as well.*
- *Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the disenfranchised are not in prison but are on probation, on parole or have completed their sentences.*
- *1.4 million African American men -- 13 percent of the adult African American male population -- have lost the right to vote, a rate of disenfranchisement that is seven times the national average. By comparison, in the 1996 general election 4.6 million African American men voted.*
- *In Florida one in three African American men has permanently lost the right to vote.*
- *In five states Iowa, Mississippi, New Mexico, Virginia, and Wyoming one in four black men (24% to 28%) have permanently lost the right to vote.*

Can we expect people to be responsible citizens if they are treated as second class citizens?

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
703-354-5694, 703-354-5695 (fax), info@csdp.org, www.csdp.org

Sources: Fellner, Jamie and Mauer, Marc, "Losing the Vote: The Impact of Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch & The Sentencing Project, 1998).

Mauer, Marc and Allard, Patricia, "Regaining the Vote: An Assessment of Activity Relating to Felon Disenfranchisement Laws" (Washington, DC: Sentencing Project, January 2000), from the web at http://www.sentencingproject.org/news/regainvote.htm, last accessed Sept. 27, 2000.

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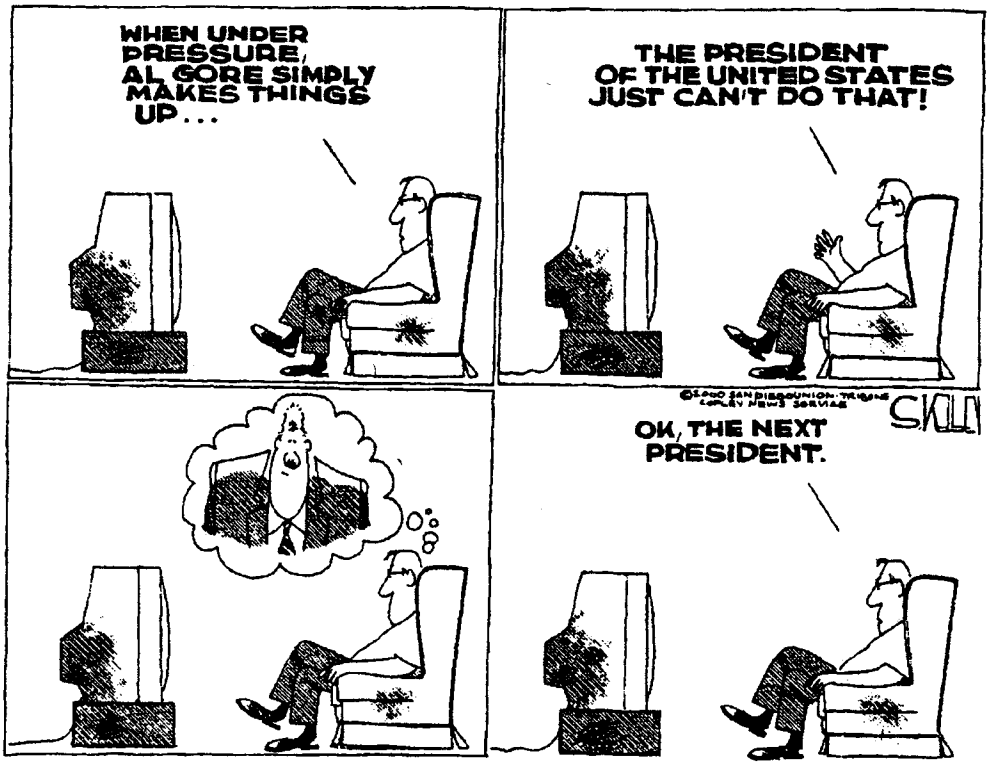
HELP!!!!


WHEN UNDER PRESSURE, AL GORE SIMPLY MAKES THINGS UP...
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES JUST CAN'T DO THAT!
OK, THE NEXT PRESIDENT.
SKELLY

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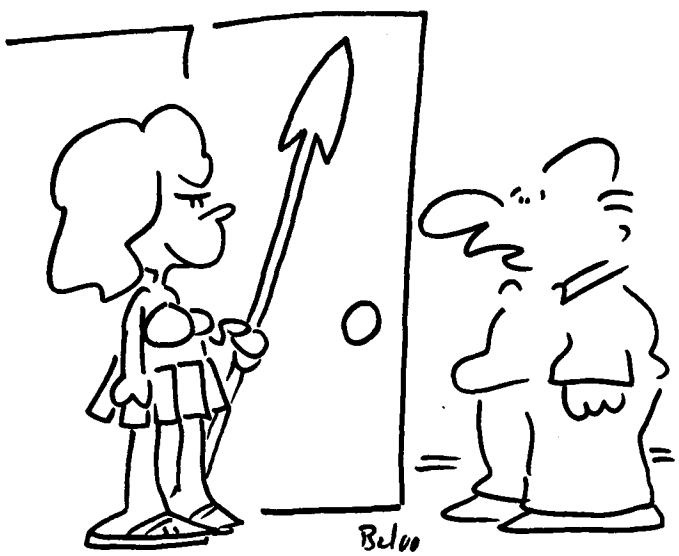

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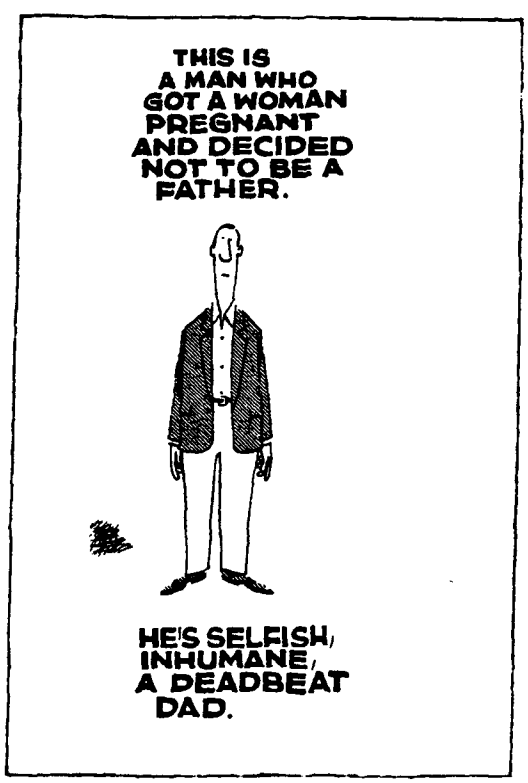
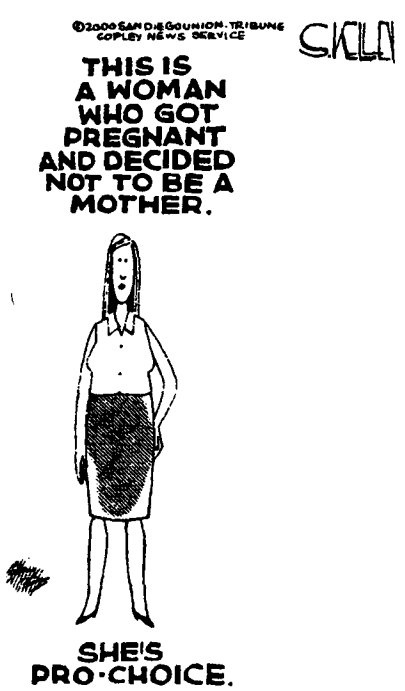
Morphed into what bugged Moby Dick
Whenever Ahab hit the deck:
Now student medics rubberneck.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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CKELLY
THIS IS A WOMAN WHO GOT PREGNANT AND DECIDED NOT TO BE A MOTHER.
SHE'S PRO-CHOICE.

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Achilles in Pinstripes

HERBERT I. LONDON

Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life, by Richard Ben Cramer (Simon & Schuster, 560 pp., $28)

Bettmann/CORBIS

Joltin' Joe homers in Philadelphia, June 28, 1939

NINETEEN THIRTY-FOUR was a tough year for the New York Yankees. It was painfully clear that the mighty Bambino was in the twilight of his majestic career, and as good as Lou Gehrig was, he couldn't carry the team by himself. Besides, he didn't have Babe Ruth's charisma.

The Yankees' owner, brewery heir Jacob Ruppert, was the George Steinbrenner of his era: blustery, overbearing, larger than life. Finishing second to the Detroit Tigers, as the Yankees did in '34, was simply unacceptable. So in a convoluted deal Ruppert gambled on a much-heralded kid with a bum knee from the Pacific Coast League, "a dago named DiMaggio."

From the moment DiMaggio arrived in training camp he was at the top of the marquee. This 21-year-old kid from San Francisco who rarely spoke and had no education, the son of a Sicilian fisherman, was a natural at the plate and seemed to know intuitively everything there was to know about making it big in the Big Leagues and in America itself.

As Richard Ben Cramer writes in his extraordinary biography, DiMaggio became a national myth, a man who was apotheosized as the American Achilles. From the moment of his arrival the effusions began. And at least for a time, DiMaggio proved himself worthy. Led by Joltin' Joe, the Yankee Clipper, the Yankees won the World Series in '36, '37, '38, '39, '41, '47, '49, '50, and '51. In 1941, Joe hit in 56 consecutive games, a record that remains unbroken. Even with war clouds on the horizon—with German planes raining bombs on London, and France under the sway of goose-stepping Nazis—the number one question on Americans' minds was: Could Joe keep it going?

What became known as The Streak came to seem a portent of the nation's victory in World War II. DiMaggio himself was the poster boy for valor and grace. He embodied the great melting pot that turned immigrants from Italian-speaking fishermen into unbeatable mythic figures for an exceptional nation. Italian-Americans especially were hungry for a hero. Mussolini had become a villain and a running joke. Al Capone made headlines but not the kind that made Italians proud. Primo Carnera was a circus strongman who became heavyweight champ, but the Jewish Max Baer turned the "man of steel" into a sheet of tinfoil in their 1934 championship bout.

DiMaggio was everything those people were not. He was young, quiet—mute would be more like it—seemingly dignified, homegrown, and a winner. He played the national game and he played it with style. Here was the face Italian Americans—and Americans generally—wanted to show the world.

Yet, as Cramer points out, despite the air of immortality that wafted around DiMaggio, despite his glorious deeds, there was another side to Joe that obsequious reporters didn't reveal. Joe could be surly and nasty to those who got too close. His first marriage to Dorothy Arnold failed in part because he wanted to control her every action, and when she resisted, his tantrums were violent. Joe's courtly image could not be tarnished: He needed every hair in place and never a crease in his well-tailored suits. He had dozens of friends to do his bidding. They took his clothes to the cleaners, brought food to his room, and when requested, delivered women to satisfy his sexual appetite.

Meanwhile, standing on his pedestal, DiMaggio had begun to believe and act on his own press releases. In the Golden Age of baseball there was a conspiracy of silence about money and embarrassing behavior. Sportswriters didn't reveal anything about the Bambino's gargantu-

Mr. London is the John M. Olin professor of humanities at New York University and president of the Hudson Institute.

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an sexual appetite or DiMaggio's violent temper, even when the evidence was paraded before them.

But the hero who could hit for power and average, who could chase a fly ball like a gazelle and had a cannon for an arm, started to lose his magical powers at an early age. For the first seven years of his career DiMaggio was arguably as productive an anyone in baseball history, but nagging injuries, specifically bone spurs in his heels, diminished his effectiveness. As with Achilles, DiMaggio's heel was vulnerable even when it appeared he hadn't any weakness.

DiMaggio's real weakness, however, was not his heel but his heart. In 1952, Joe saw a photo of a beautiful young actress who showed up at the Philadelphia A's training camp and took a photo with the darkly handsome slugger Gus Zernial. Joe was livid: "How come that f***in' busher gets to meet a beautiful girl like that?" A "blind date" with Marilyn Monroe was set up, and Joe's life was never the same. He was caught in the web of infatuation and stardom—his and hers.

Marilyn was a Hollywood goddess as Joe was a baseball god. Yet Joe had a conventional idea of marriage that he tried to impose on the erratic Marilyn. In Cramer's words, "they might have been brother and sister. Joe's insistence made them husband and wife." The marriage lasted less than a year. Joe's volcanic eruptions and beatings brought Marilyn to divorce court. Yet their lives were interminably linked. Joe never stopped loving her and she never stopped leaning on him. Time and again Joe would ask her forgiveness and beg for a reunion, but to no avail.

■

DiMaggio's real weakness was not his heel but his heart.

■

After she'd been used like a dishrag by Sinatra and the Kennedys, he told her she could do whatever she wanted in movies, see her shrink, even take the pills to which she had become addicted, as long as she would marry him again. She finally said yes. Yet that marriage never occurred. Marilyn died in what was described as a suicide. DiMaggio swore it wasn't true. *They* had killed her, he fumed—the Kennedys and Sinatra. Though they had been divorced for almost nine years, he organized the funeral himself, keeping out everyone but a few close associates. Joe wanted to be her only worshipper, and for the rest of his life he held on to her memory. If anyone mentioned her name or even made an indirect reference to her, DiMaggio would leave the room.

In 1969, DiMaggio was named the "greatest living player" by baseball writers voting informally. It wasn't an official appellation, but he loved it. They could have named Ted Williams, his rival from Boston, or Willie Mays or Hank Aaron or the upstart Mickey Mantle. Eddie Liberatore, one of DiMaggio's admirers, told him, "Look, Joe. God made Mozart and He said, 'You're gonna be a genius for music.' He made Michelangelo, He said, 'You're gonna be a genius for art.' He made you—'You're gonna be a genius for baseball.'" DiMaggio thought that over, and replied, "You might be right."

Even when he was in his 80s people wanted to be part of the DiMaggio mystique, and they paid handsomely for his presence and his signature. DiMaggio believed it was his due. He expected a return on any investment of his time but resented anyone else who made money from his exalted status. "Why should those guys make a buck off my life?" he said.

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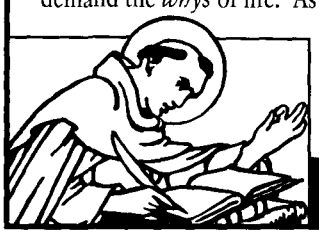

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With age, Joe grew increasingly difficult. His moods were a function of a lesson he learned from life—that you can't trust anyone. No man, not even Joe, was as crucial to the game as the myth had maintained. Once Joe started to see baseball as a business, his reputation suffered. The hero Americans loved was a baseball sensation, not a guy exploiting his reputation for money.

Yet for some, the myth never diminished. Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel sang, "Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?" But Joltin' Joe was gone, eaten up by the hero machine. The nation did not turn its lonely eyes to him, except for those who could still remember a graceful center fielder making difficult plays look easy.

Cramer isn't out to debunk the DiMaggio legend, as some reviewers claim. Rather, he sees in DiMaggio a manufactured hero whose physical excellence is confused with moral excellence. This is not a criticism of DiMaggio so much as a criticism of media panjandrums who escalate achievement on the diamond to an issue of moral consequence. Perhaps we ask too much of our heroes. After all, just because a kid from San Francisco hits successfully in 56 consecutive games doesn't mean he is capable of Solomonic wisdom.

With heroism diluted in our time—in part because myths are so easily punctured, like soap bubbles—DiMaggio remains an exemplar. He wasn't grand and noble, courageous and daring as a hero should be, but he played the game of baseball with style and even elegance. Compared to the players of today he was a model of rectitude. He didn't preen in front of a camera or stand and admire his own home run. Can anyone imagine Joe DiMaggio wearing his cap backwards?

DiMaggio was a great player who briefly illuminated the field of dreams. Perhaps that is what should remain on his tombstone. In Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*, the fisherman dreams of talking to DiMaggio, but Joe would most likely have rebuffed his overtures. No matter: Joe still lived in the old man's imagination, just as he remains a remarkable memory for a rapidly disappearing generation of baseball aficionados. **NR**

Atlas Shrugs

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Bellow: A Biography, by James Atlas (Random House, 688 pp., $35)

WHEN told that all great men had their disciples, Oscar Wilde sighed his assent, while adding that it always seemed to be Judas who wrote the biography. It might not have been overstating matters to call James Atlas a disciple of Saul Bellow; he himself tells us that when he rose from the table where he had been reading "Charm and Death"—Bellow's unpublished story about Isaac Rosenfeld—he knew he would write its author's biography. And he had already produced an excellent life of Delmore Schwartz, the poet and dreamer and drunk who inspired the eponym of *Humboldt's Gift*. If not a disciple in the acolyte sense, then certainly a "follower"; an exegete, even a "maven." In the New Testament, Judas's principal role is to *identify* Jesus (a superfluous task, one might agree with Kierkegaard, in the case of the most celebrated preacher in Palestine). So the joke can be turned upon Wilde if the biographer succeeds well enough in making us feel we know the subject. Atlas, however, seems to have developed a slight disdain for his chosen subject, without quite refining this disdain into a critique.

Bellow's life has been reasonably full of incident, to be sure, but its essential interest inheres more in the battle of ideas than in the struggle for survival. The edifice of his work is notable, among many other things, for the way that it synthesizes the two. In one way, it's a tale worn smooth in the telling: Bright Jewish kid is born in the first generation of overworked refugees from the Pale or the *shtetl*, learns early that life is tough, flirts with radical and collectivist ideas, gets an omnivore's education, makes good and becomes more rooted, more conservative. This part-sentimental *Hester Street* parabola, classically described by Irving Howe in *World of Our Fathers*, sometimes airbrushes such matters as crime and family dysfunction. Bellow has never been much inclined to any sort of euphemism, and Atlas's strong opening section is faithful to its subject in this respect. When the Bellows arrive in Quebec just before the Great War, they go down in the world rather than up. (Young Solomon, the future Saul, isn't even sure of his precise date of birth.) Disproving yet again the ancient rumor that Jews are mainly good at business, the senior Bellows fail at venture after venture, turn to bootlegging and petty larceny, eventually do a flit to Chicago and stiff their landlord on the rent. By the time he is grown, the young man has had a near-death experience, lost his mother, and learned that the world is a cynical place. He has also demonstrated great aptitude for liturgy and literature, in Yiddish as well as English.

If you want to know about Saul Bellow's wives, mistresses, indiscretions, and alimony grudges, then James Atlas is your man.

Quoting Isaac Rosenfeld on the next stage of Bellow's life—the ideological brawling of the years of Depression and Fascism—Atlas has him saying: "One ate and drank it; and sleep gave no escape, for it furnished terror to our dreams: Hitler, Mussolini, the Moscow Trials, the Spanish Civil War, the plaguey bill of Stalinism, the stopgaps of NRA, WPA, and the New Deal, and the approach of inevitable war." Yet this is exactly the atmosphere of combat and urgency and excitement that Atlas fails to evoke himself. His account of Bellow's involvement with various Trotskyist sects (which culminated in a

Mr. Hitchens is a columnist for *Vanity Fair* and *The Nation*. His collection of essays, *Unacknowledged Legislation: Writers in the Public Sphere*, will be published this fall.

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"A Feast Fit for a Glutton."

—Norman Podhoretz

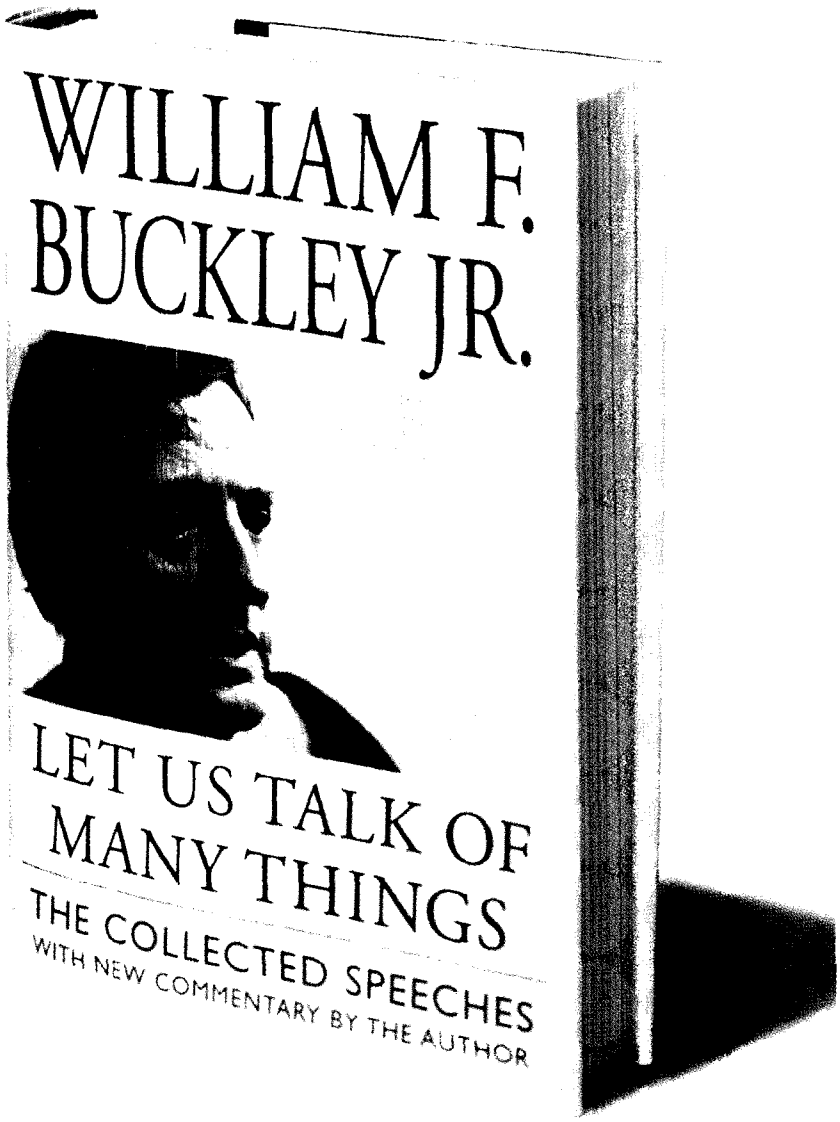
I

—Michael Kinsley

—Andrew Ferguson

—David Brudnoy

—Peter Robinson



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visit to Mexico to see the Old Man himself; arriving the day after he had been assassinated but nonetheless glimpsing him in the morgue—such raw material!) is a perfunctory one. And this skimpiness is a disappointment for two reasons. First, as Atlas has good reason to know, such dialectical disputations were the surrogate, to many brilliant young men and women, for the intense Talmudic exercises of their ancestors. Second, the brush with revolutionary politics supplies a good part of the hectic energy of Bellow's masterpiece, *The Adventures of Augie March*. But the two strands of literature and life are not combined by the narrator. Missing an obvious trick, and substituting "research" for research, Atlas digs up a journalistic piece by the young Bellow from the same period, entitled "Pets of the North Shore," about suburban females and their absurd dogs. While patronizing Bellow for drawing conclusions about "decadence" from this very amusing *feuilleton*, Atlas fails to notice that it is also the provenance of the funniest section of *Augie March*: the young man's pooch-grooming days.

The next time that a Bellovian relationship with an intellectual guru or mentor comes up, it receives much fuller treatment. I must confess that I was amazed to learn that Bellow had a Reichian period in the early 1950s; sitting in an "orgone box" and cogitating *The Function of the Orgasm*. But here, Atlas feels himself on—what to call it?—surer ground. He can describe the decay of a marriage and a sexual relationship. If you want to know about the novelist's wives, mistresses, indiscretions, alimony grudges, and alleged shortcomings in the sack (and if *The Dean's December* and *Ravelstein* haven't furnished you with sufficient clues) then Atlas is your man. This is all a matter of taste, I quite appreciate, and there's no doubt that details of this kind are useful and can sometimes be indispensable. It's just that they take up so much *room*, and that they aren't always justified, if I can employ such a pompous term, by any real bearing on the life or the work.

■

The striking thing about Bellow is how often he has been declared a 'has-been.'

■

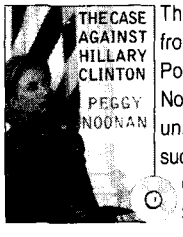
Perhaps what I really mean about such disclosures is that they are too easy, these days, to come by, and exert a sort of Gresham's Law effect on biography. (Pages and pages more, on divorce proceedings, than on the intellectual influences at *Partisan Review*, or in justifying Atlas's near-laconic claim that Bellow is "a culture snob," or in depicting—of special interest to NR readers, perhaps—the young Bellow's confrontation with Whittaker Chambers.) Something like the same may be said of another area of Atlas's interest: the world of New York publishing and journalism. Here's a rather snide paragraph on an old theme: an author's irritation with a publisher. Viking had already annoyed Bellow by producing a shoddy edition of *Humboldt's Gift*:

> He soon found other reasons to be discontented with Viking, among them Elisabeth Sifton. Rumors had begun to circulate in the house that he felt she didn't "edit enough"—meaning that she didn't pay him enough attention. During the editing of *Humboldt's Gift*, she had been staying home on Mondays to take care of her two young children; Bellow invariably called her there, "punishing me for not being on the bridge of the vessel," as Sifton put it. He expected her to be his "personal courier," she said, and even wanted her to make a special trip to Chicago to pick up the galleys.

Well, maybe Bellow rang her at home because he could be sure of finding her in, or sure of not getting an evasive secretary. When I win the Nobel Prize for Literature—as Bellow had done two years before this tragic episode in the life of Ms. Sifton—I too will expect my publishers to pay attention, and perhaps even pamper me a little. I'm sorry, but the above is a gossip paragraph, supplied by grudge-holders and lazily reproduced (as in the sloppy, should I say "dangling" construction that identifies Ms. Sifton as a "reason"). And it's not sufficiently atypical.

The episode of the Nobel itself is well described, as are other minor-key moments such as Bellow's cameo appearance in *Zelig* and his role in making sure that Susan Sontag and Edward Said didn't get MacArthur "genius" awards (or at least not for as long as he could have a say in the matter). But the long withdrawing roar of his move to the cultural and political Right is patchily handled and once again one has the sensation that this stuff doesn't really interest Atlas enough. Whatever animated and motivated Bellow, it partook of a mixture of emotions and convictions, related simultaneously to the deterioration of race relations in Chicago and the fluctuations of tribalism in the Middle East and perhaps (as with *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and more recently with *Ravelstein*) forming an allegory of the connection between the two. This is fairly subtle and volatile material; it shouldn't be reduced to what Atlas breezily terms Bellow's "ill-concealed racism."

The striking thing about Bellow is how often he has been declared a "has-been." Many reviewers panned *The Dean's December*; the vultures gathered around the publication of *The Actual*; after another near-death experience in the Caribbean it was thought that the old boy had truly given up, and then came *Ravelstein*, which (though no masterpiece in my opinion) was effusively received by better critics than me and convinced Sven Birkerts, for example, to renounce his earlier writing-off of Bellow as finished. Atlas ends his book with the image of a slightly pathetic oldster, discussing death and last things with his dear friend Martin Amis. I couldn't rid myself of the feeling that this, too, was somehow premature and even a little impertinent. **NR**



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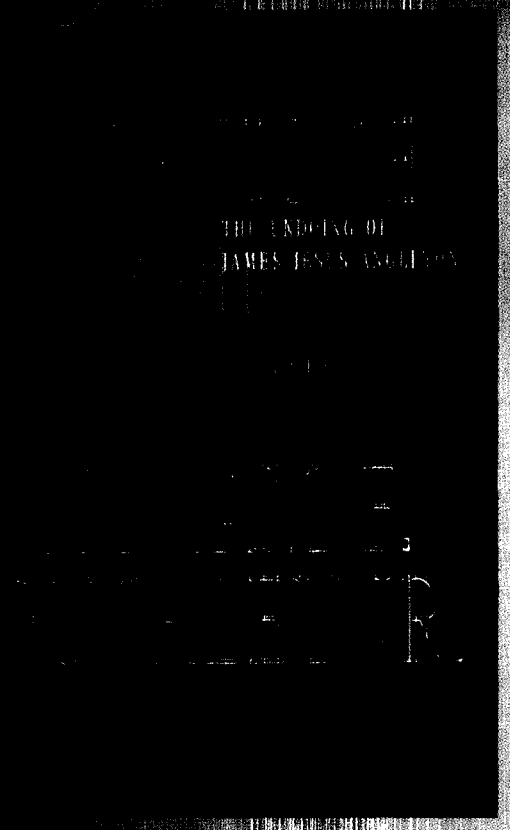

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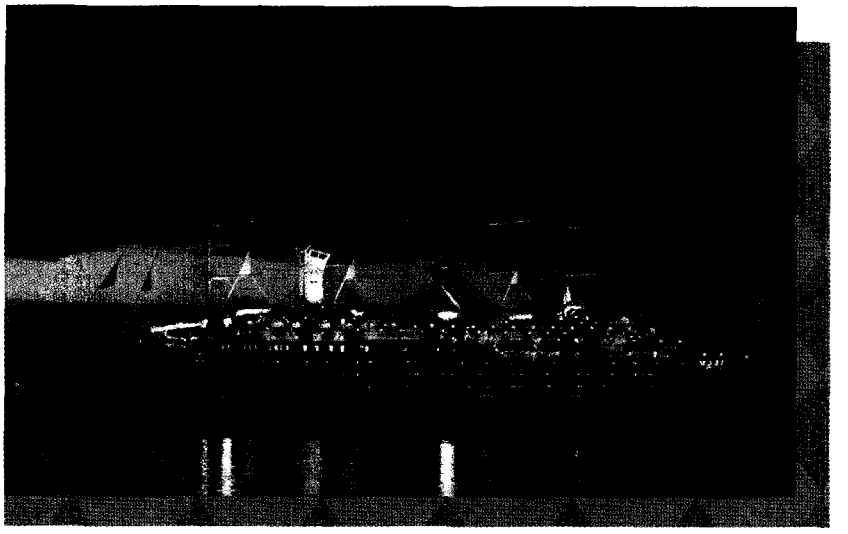

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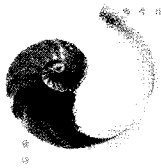

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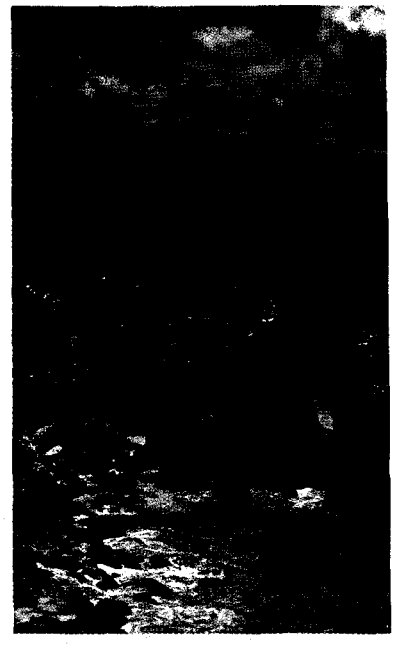

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ILES DES SAINTES, LESSER ANTILLES. Pastoral and far off the beaten track, the Saintes are a cluster of eight islands off the southern coast of Guadeloupe. In Bourg, the charming hamlet on Terre-de-Haut, the largest island, you can wander peaceful streets past small houses, then follow the narrow road out of town through fields and hills to a sweeping strand of secluded beaches.

NEVIS, LEEWARD ISLANDS. Nevis is an almost-perfect volcanic cone rising up from the sea and covered with bougainvillea, hibiscus, and many other lush tropical plants. For a time we'll be anchoring outside of Charlestown, the island's capital, for those who wish to go ashore on tours or on their own, then repositioning to a nearby idyllic beach for an afternoon of watersports, sunning, and a festive beach barbecue.

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DATE	PORT/TIMES	EXCLUSIVE *NR* EVENTS
Dec. 11 (Mon.)	At Sea	Morning & Afternoon Seminars, Cocktail Reception (pre-dinner)
Dec. 13 (Wed.)	St Martin, 8AM–1AM	Morning Seminar
Dec. 15 (Fri.)	Iles des Saintes, 8AM–5PM	Afternoon Seminar, Late-night smoker (post-dinner)
Dec. 17 (Sun.)	Bridgetown, 6AM arrival	

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Malcontent du Jour

JACOB HEILBRUNN

One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy, by Thomas Frank (Doubleday, 414 pp., $26)

THE longer America's economic boom continues, the more inventive the naysayers have become to explain it away. Already the New Economy has produced a minor cottage industry devoted to complaining about America's supposed irrational exuberance. But it is probably safe to say that no one has attacked it as cheekily as Thomas Frank. He is hip and cool and authentic—a culture critic who mixes academic theories with smartass prose.

Frank is, you might say, the Great White Hope of the Left. Everyone from *Harper's* editor Lewis Lapham to *New York Observer* columnist Ron Rosenbaum has hailed him as a brilliant muckraking dissenter in a new "Gilded Age" of corporate conformity. His latest book has made the cover of *The Nation* and is festooned with endorsements attesting to his status as the next H. L. Mencken or Dwight Macdonald. Certainly Frank is a pungent writer, and he has paid his dues. After earning a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, he founded a quirky little magazine called *The Baffler*. He first attracted attention by editing a book called *Commodify Your Dissent*, which contained essays from *The Baffler*. Now, in *One Market Under God*, Frank blows a giant raspberry at the American worship of consumerism.

Like David Brooks in *Bobos in Paradise*, Frank believes that a profound cultural shift has taken place in the U.S. Picking up where *Commodify Your Dissent* left off, Frank observes that the anti-authoritarian rhetoric of the 1960s has been pilfered by corporations in order to alter their traditional image as hierarchical and exploitative. "For writers schooled in the culture wars, the most important conflict in America was and will forever be the one between the hip and the square, the flag-burning and the church-going, the hippie and the suit," he writes. "But as the '90s progressed . . . as jeans replaced suits in the offices of America, and as the ultra-hip culture of cyberspace became the culture of the corporation generally, business increasingly imagined itself on the other side of the equation." But where Brooks, a self-described member in good standing of the new middle upper class, could smile indulgently at this development, Frank can only grimace.

■

Thomas Frank ignores the fact that today's economy has been good for just about everybody.

■

Frank is infuriated by the placidity and contentment a booming stock market has bred in America. He dismisses the New Economy itself as a gigantic hoax, a cynical marketing fraud that has duped most Americans into thinking the stock market is on their side. The New Economy, he explains, is a lie at the most basic level; it isn't even new. "Industries come and industries go," Frank writes, "but what has most changed about America in the '90s is the way we think about industries, about economies." Americans used to believe that economic democracy meant a decent standard of living for everyone and that freedom was only meaningful after poverty and powerlessness had been eradicated. It used to be that politicians talked about "malefactors of great wealth" and Wall Street was regarded with suspicion and hostility. It used to be that unions and government regulators kept the worst impulses of business in check.

No longer. In a stunning reversal, Wall Street, the banks, and the Fortune 500 are seen as being on the side of the common man, while big government has become the enemy, stifling initiative and freedom. Indeed, Americans now believe that democracy and the free market are identical, that new wealth can have a liberating effect—that the new high-tech economy has made it possible for the day-trader to wipe out old money. The New Economy, Frank says, "is not some novel state of human affairs but the final accomplishment of the long-standing agenda of the nation's richest class." Consequently, the U.S. is marketing populism around the globe—the idea that there is something natural, divine, and democratic about free markets.

How could everyone have been bamboozled so easily? Frank fingers writers and economists such as Thomas Friedman, James J. Cramer, Joseph Nocera, Lawrence Kudlow, and Tom Peters as the main propagandists for the new global order. Their credo is that markets are empowering, a place where, in Thomas Friedman's words, international finance has "turned the whole world into a parliamentary system" that allows people to "vote every hour, every day through their mutual funds, their pension funds, their brokers, and, more and more, from their own basements via the Internet."

If Frank is exasperated by Friedman & Co., he is incensed by technology guru George Gilder. It was Gilder, Frank says, who wedded computers to free-market politics. According to Frank, "With Reagan finally departed from the White House and the backlash sentiments he had done so much to popularize on the wane, Gilder appears to have been one of the first to give up on culture war [*sic*] . . ." Gilder now saw the Internet and the personal computer as the keys to dislodging old money. In the microchip industry, pedigree and wealth were irrelevant. What counted were the ordinary heroes who would remake the world—immigrants, science wonks, nerds. But in Frank's telling this was merely a smokescreen for the transfer of wealth from the poor to the already wealthy: "The heroes of Gilder's populism are men of colossal fortunes and arcane financial manipulation: Bill Gates, Andy Grove, John Malone, Michael Milken. It is a populism that, even as it allows us to choose from more entertainment than ever before, serves to transfer the wealth of the nation upward in a gigantic heave-ho."

Unfortunately, Frank's punches fly so furiously that he ends up completely missing his target. He ignores funda-

Mr. Heilbrunn writes for the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

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mental truths about today's economy—like, umm, the fact that it's been good for just about everybody. Indeed, for all his animus towards Gilder, Frank cannot avoid conceding that he turned out to be prophetic. Gilder may not have invented the Internet, but he did recognize its importance before anyone else. He was also right about the destructive effects it would have upon traditional elites; a new generation of bumptious upstarts is now muscling its way in. In a few decades, figures like 35-year-old Washington Redskins owner and tech millionaire Dan Snyder will be the new establishment, wary of the next wave of entrepreneurs seeking to knock them off. So it goes in an economy where creative destruction doesn't destroy creativity, but demands it.

No doubt Frank is on target in ridiculing the preposterous predictions made by some of the Internet's champions such as Thomas Friedman, who seems to think that the Internet will abolish national borders, inaugurate a world government, and bring about universal peace. But even if that's not in the cards, the benefits of the Internet economy shouldn't be discounted. At home and abroad, the New Economy has had profoundly beneficial effects.

For a start, the New Economy has forced traditional businesses to innovate and downsize. Long before Western Europe, the U.S. made the painful shift from an industrial-based economy to one based on high technology. Though Frank never really discusses it, France, Germany, and Japan can only dream about the kind of job creation that has taken place in the U.S. For a while, defenders of the European way would maintain that only demeaning McDonald's-type jobs had been created in the U.S., but even that fiction has been abandoned. The socialists in Germany are now moving to slash confiscatory taxes and to privatize the communications industry.

Nor is Frank's contention that the New Economy has brought about a massive transfer of wealth from the middle to the upper class very persuasive. The truth is that the New Economy has created an even newer upper-middle class whose prosperity has trickled down. Frank's claims about an impoverished middle class—"Here at home the price

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was the destruction of the social contract of mid-century, the middle-class republic itself"—defy credulity. Most American inner cities, which were given up for lost in the 1970s, are rebounding economically, including the seemingly hopeless New York, Washington, D.C., and Detroit, which have seen retailers such as Kmart, Home Depot, and Shoppers Food Warehouse open up stores. So scorching is the New Economy that a number of businesses are having trouble attracting and retaining employees. Black unemployment has gone down, and the overall unemployment rate has sunk to a decades-low rate of 3.9 percent. Inflation is negligible. What would Frank prefer? Stagflation?

Finally, Frank ascribes a kind of coherence to the global economy that exists only in the overwrought minds of its opponents. For one thing, the spate of advertisements by Fortune 500 companies touting their authenticity and rebellious nature have a rather desperate whiff to them. Instead of leading gullible dupes, as Frank suggests, they are scrambling to keep pace with a demotic culture that is constantly shifting and adapting. By the time corporations have caught on, the next trend is in full swing. For another, if the global economy were that easy to manipulate, it wouldn't have come close to melting down on several occasions. The ructions in the Middle East are only the latest example of how everything could go wrong. Imagine what would happen to the European, Asian, and American economies were fundamentalists to seize power in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Oil prices would skyrocket; it would be the 1970s all over again. Given Frank's loathing of the current state of affairs, though, it's just possible he might prefer collapse to prosperity.

Or would he? For all the plangent notes sounded by Frank, he never offers much of an alternative. His portraits of corporate flacks can be extremely amusing, but that's about it. There are no proposals for, say, raising income taxes or strengthening campaign-finance laws or anything else one might expect from a foe of corporate capitalism. There aren't even any hard numbers in his book. But no matter. There is apparently a burgeoning market for books attacking the free market. What Frank offers in his slickly packaged book is attitude, authenticity, rebelliousness—the very traits that he complains corporations are relentlessly marketing to conceal the inadequacy of their products and behavior. The rather unkind thought therefore arises that Frank himself, in his desire to become the next hot commodity, may not be immune to the temptations of the New Economy. Anyone searching for the next H. L. Mencken should look elsewhere. **NR**

■ SHELF LIFE ■

PROBABLY the most taxing choice facing any book lover has always been the most basic one: What to read next? Since 1986, a mail-order book company called A Common Reader has been making strong recommendations in its very selective catalogues. It is now also a publishing company, with its own line of Common Reader Editions, and has just begun a very promising imprint called REDISCOVERIES • LONDON, whose purpose is "to see returned to print favorite books that have been undeservedly neglected—20th-century classics and near-classics to be read with pleasure in the 21st." Advising this imprint is a stellar convocation of English writers, chaired by John Train and including historians John Julius Norwich and Thomas Pakenham.

The first offering in the series is *Come, Tell Me How You Live* (207 pp., $18.95) by Agatha Christie Mallowan, the noted mystery writer. The book was selected by David Pryce-Jones, a member of the advisory group who is well known to readers of NATIONAL REVIEW as the author of discerning articles on international affairs. Christie's book is a thoroughly charming memoir, first published in 1946, of her experiences on an expedition to Syria with her husband, the prominent archeologist Max Mallowan. Her enthusiasm is infectious, from the very beginning—when she is asked to apply her bulk to the purpose of closing suitcases ("'If you can't make them shut,' says Max ungallantly, 'nobody can!'")—to her final "*El Hamdu Lillah*" ("We all praise God together").

Christie writes that archeology is the process of asking the past: How did you live? "Occasionally there is a Royal Palace, sometimes a Temple, much more rarely a Royal burial. These things are spectacular. They appear in newspapers in headlines, are lectured about . . . Yet I think to one engaged in digging, the real interest is in the everyday life—the life of the potter, the farmer, the tool-maker, the expert cutter of animal seals and amulets . . ."

This joy in everyday life animates the whole book. "The light is lovely—a very faint soft rose softens the browns and greys. From the top of a mound one looks out over an apparently deserted world. . . . Here, some five thousand years ago, was the busy part of the world. Here were the beginnings of civilisation, and here, picked up by me, this broken fragment of a clay pot, hand-made, with a design of dots and cross-hatching in black paint, is the forerunner of the Woolworth cup out of which this very morning I have drunk my tea. . . ."

Christie portrays, in her anecdotes about the members of the expedition, the very different ways in which one can play the role of "an Englishman abroad." She herself is a much more winsome figure than the patronizing English matron of colonial stereotype; she indicates that she is aware of the type, and positions herself against it—but not in a manner so self-conscious as to risk alienating the reader.

Fans of her mysteries will be agreeably reminded of one of her most memorable settings; even as she came to view the Orient Express as "an old familiar friend," its "thrill . . . never quite died down." Her love for the Orient Express is clear, and quite endearing.

The second book in the series, the 1932 novel *Peking Picnic* by Ann Bridge (320 pp., $19.95), has an equally exotic setting. These books are not available in bookstores, but only from A Common Reader, 141 Tompkins Ave., Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570 (tel: 800-832-7323), and the website commonreader.com. Their catalogue makes good reading in itself. —MICHAEL POTEMRA

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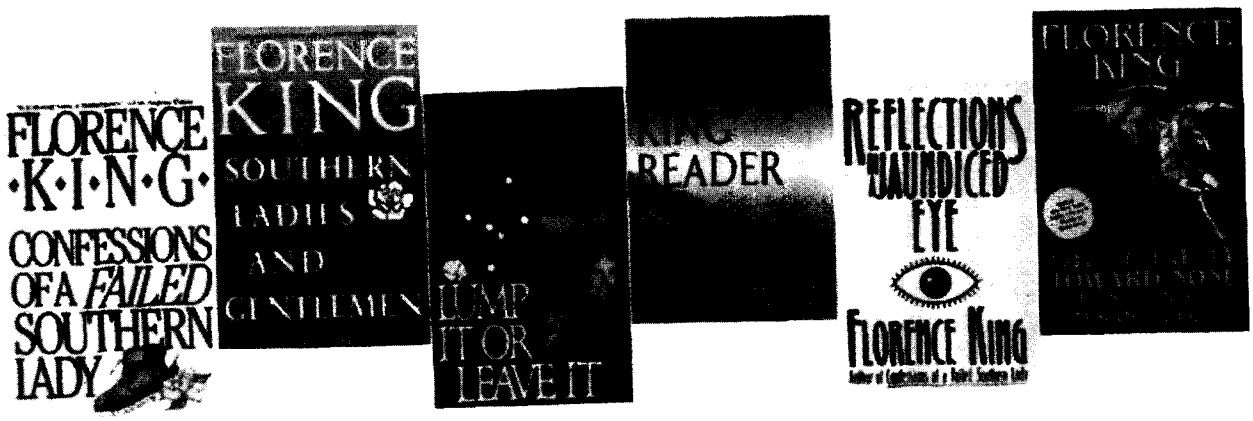

She's America's Misanthrope. She's the Queen of Spleen. She's Florence King. Now Get This Curmudgeon's Classic Books—Direct from *National Review.*

Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady The unrivaled account of growing up in an eccentric Southern family (read it and you'll know why Little Florence would have been beloved by even W. C. Fields). Hailed as one of the best memoirs ever written, and rightly so: this true tale of Granny's gone-awry attempt to raise Florence as a Perfect Southern Lady overflows with wit, gusto, bawdiness, and flat-out unsurpassed writing. This peek into the rearing of America's reigning misanthrope is a must for any King fan, and anyone who enjoys an uproarious read. "A stunning book, a masterpiece." –*Los Angeles Times* **$11.95/quality paperback.**

Southern Ladies and Gentlemen *The* guide to the ways and means of Southern culture. King wields her terrible swift stiletto to slice through the kudzu of Dixie manners and archetypes, including the Southern Woman, the Self-Rejuvenating Virgin, and the Good Ole Boy. "This is the best book ever written about the South....And on top of that it's delectably funny." –*Chattanooga Times* **$10.95/quality paperback.**

Lump It or Leave It King gives no quarter in these acid-laced reflections on American tomfoolery. From the joys of menopause to the hazards of fame, from college professors ("incapable of earning a living with either their minds or their hands") and the U.S. government ("the crude leading the crud") to that favorite of subjects, the South ("if at first you don't secede, try, try, again"), there are few blockheads or brainless trends left standing after Miss Anthrope has her way with them. "The scent of sulpher and brimstone wafts off the page....venom on a par with Dorothy Parker's literary bite." –*Chicago Sun-Times* **$9.95/quality paperback.**

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■ FILM ■

Taking the Low Road

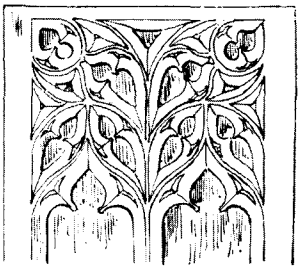
JOHN SIMON

THE problem with Robert Altman, I have always thought, is a lack of intelligence. Talent he has, and not a little, though somewhat less than he and his fans may think. But it is a very naïve notion that talent guarantees intelligence and good judgment: Gifted actors, for instance, need have no intellect whatever. With directors, brains become much more important, but even they can rely heavily on actors, scenarists, and cinematographers, plus a certain innate or acquired cinematic savvy.

Still, it took real directorial talent to have made M*A*S*H*, *Nashville*, and bits of other Altman films, even if not the totality of them. In recent years his films have become more erratic, none more risibly so than ***Dr. T & the Women***, which is about as derisory and dismissible as a movie can get.

For *Dr. T & the Women*, Altman employed the same screenwriter as for *Cookie's Fortune*, Anne Rapp. Although that film was feeble enough, here Miss Rapp has surpassed herself in absurdity, cutesiness, and plain dumbness. Some reviewers have rightly objected to the film's misogyny, which is bad enough; but that this misogyny masquerades hypocritically as affection for women, and fools some people, is even more offensive.

Dr. Sully Travis, a/k/a Dr. T, is the must-have gynecologist of Dallas. Not only is he played by the sexy Richard Gere, he is also the most skilled practitioner and self-proclaimed only true understander of women in the city. If Dr. Seuss's Dr. T had 5,000 fingers, Altman's has ten magic ones with which to caress women's lower parts, and a million flatteries with which to cajole the upper ones. No wonder his office, which employs enough nurses and receptionists to staff ten TV hospital shows, and in which the traffic and noise level outclasses Grand Central Station's, is, it seems, the hub of Dallas's medical, social, and sexual-fantasy life. The cavalier doctor allows his patients to keep their gaudy hats on and smoke as he probes their privates, acting as psychotherapist, spiritual guide, and surrogate lover. He is, to be sure, a faithful husband and good father who doesn't sleep with his patients, but that, in the total context, is a minor technicality.



It all begins at a mall, in Tiffany's, where we encounter a gaggle of the film's main women along with other gagglers in one of Altman's favorite maneuvers: a soundtrack on which any number of people talk simultaneously in a babel of voices. This is not even naturalism, for in life we can separate out the voice we want to hear from almost any hubbub; on film, where we cannot, communication should matter at least as much. Of course there are moments when atmosphere is all, but Altman perversely uses the device even where we strain desperately to make sense, to show us that his words are gold and worth every effort in panning for them.

Presently, Dr. T's wife Kate (Farrah Fawcett) goes bananas, and strips nude in the plaza fountain. She is carted off to a hospital and diagnosed as suffering from a Hestia complex (unknown, I dare say, to psychiatry), whereby rich, overindulged housewives go over the top. Her sister, the recently divorced and ferociously smoking and drinking Peggy (Laura Dern), moves in with T, adding her three small daughters to T's two grown-up ones—Dee Dee (Kate Hudson), a cheerleader, and Connie (Tara Reid), a tour guide—thus turning the house into yet another female circus.

Now it's all very well for T to spout stuff like "Women are by nature saints and their sacredness should be treated as such," but just how does Altman treat these saints? In nearly all of his films a woman is cruelly humiliated or turns out to be a betraying bitch. Here we have Kate's public disrobing, daughter Connie's snitching on her sister, and Dee Dee's leaving her fiancé at the altar to run off with her bridesmaid and true love, Marilyn (Liv Tyler). Peggy behaves like a lunatic throughout, as do most of T's patients. Worst among them is the rich harpy Dorothy (well played by Janine Turner); most pathetic is T's chief nurse, Carolyn (Shelley Long), who, officiously oversolicitous throughout, picks the worst possible moment in her boss's office to begin stripping and trying to seduce him.

The doctor himself, frustrated by his wife's hospitalization and lack of interest in him, starts an affair with the new golf pro, Bree (Helen Hunt in one of her rare mediocre performances), or, rather, lets this domineering woman start one with him, only to promptly cast him off for one of his best male friends. Anne Rapp's dialogue does little to make any of this more believable or interesting, though in all fairness she makes the trio of males with whom T goes duck hunting in a few brief scenes scarcely more flattering to men than her female characters are to women. But then, no pretense is made of liking the men—they aren't even, like most of the women, golden blondes.

The acting tends to range from indifferent to poor. Especially annoying are the Peggy of Laura Dern (whose only asset is being Bruce Dern's daughter), and the Dee Dee of Kate Hudson (whose only asset is being Goldie Hawn's daughter). Richard Gere, however, is effortlessly winning as Dr. T. The press has been asked not to divulge two final surprises; ludicrous and preposterous as they are, they are only marginally worse than the rest.

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■ In *Bamboozled*, Spike Lee sets out to prove that blacks have been variously patronized, ridiculed, and insulted in American movies, radio, and TV. This, alas, was largely true. He shows it best with a montage, near film's end, of sorry clips, more demeaning than funny. His further point, that not much has changed since then, is hardly tenable. Even less so is the satirical story he concocts—a satire both ham-fisted and absurd that is as unfair to whites as they once were to blacks. There is, to be sure, some self-criticism as well: The protagonist, a Harvard-educated black know-it-all, is, as directed by Lee and acted by Damon Wayans, a grotesque caricature (corrupted, you see, by white television), albeit still less grotesque and obnoxious than his white counterpart (Michael Rapaport).

The plot, insofar as there is one rather than a mere pile of skits, some of them funny, is a self-destructing congeries, its climax showing the country going minstrel-show crazy, with white studio audiences jigging in blackface, (in speech and competing behavior), to "out-black" blacks. There is also a violence subplot about a rebel black army, the Mau Maus, and a slapped-together love triangle that is utterly unconvincing. There is some good tap-dancing from Savion Glover, who is, unfortunately, also called on to act, at which he is hopeless. And further, there is a Jewish female media expert, whose portrayal is nothing short of venomous.

It is instructive to see many white reviewers vying to praise this farrago, and worse, excusing its obvious flaws. In the *New York Times*, for example, we read: "The very messiness of *Bamboozled* lends it an immediacy and heat that a more polished movie couldn't have generated." But isn't undue heat generated by a tendentious race-relations movie rather different from undue heat generated by a car-chase one? And even the *Times*'s (in various senses) liberal reviewer admits that the movie ends up "crumbling into melodrama." Nevertheless, in glorious contradiction, he says the movie does "what good satire is supposed to do." Spike Lee has scored better points elsewhere; here, the brew is too spiked to be intellectually stimulating. **NR**

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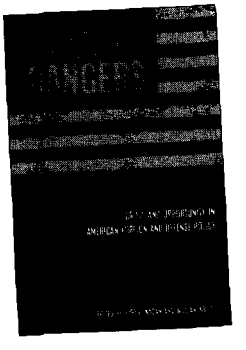

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Edited by Robert Kagan and William Kristol

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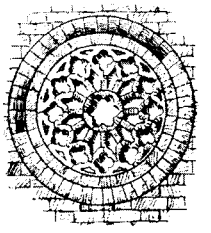
■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Reaffirming Higher Education, by Jacob Neusner and Noam M. M. Neusner (Transaction, 209 pp, $29.95)

It was Dr. Johnson, I think, who once said that mankind needs more often to be reminded than informed. This is an observation taken to heart especially by the erudite Jacob Neusner, a professor of religious studies, and his son and coauthor Noam in their latest book on higher education. This is, in fact, their second such book. Throughout the first, entitled *The Price of Excellence* (which I reviewed in these pages in 1996), the Neusners explained how higher education had fared in America in the aftermath of World War II and been transformed by national policy during the Cold War, a transformation that seemed a diffusion, if not dissipation, of purpose. Now they step back to reflect more sagely upon what essentially should be going on within those ivied—or cinder blocked—walls.

This book is well timed for an election season noisy with blather about "putting education first," though it's highly improbable that either of the major candidates or their paper-pushers would heed its message, even if they read it. Education is a slow process and notoriously averse to sound-bite nostrums. But in a larger sense, it's a book for all time, as the Neusners reidentify—and yes, reaffirm—the life of the mind and the central role the university has played, despite recent bouts of political correctness, in feeding that life. In a time when the researching professor is attacked for ignoring his teaching duties, the authors boldly reassert the traditional union of teaching and scholarship as the twin pursuits distinguishing a professor from a teacher conveying nothing beyond information.



The sell is a hard one, but the Neusners make it ably. Good professors should "educate, rather than train." Yet the Neusners also realize the difficulty entailed by students' lack of preparation upon entering college. Many students must be remediated before they can graduate to "critical thinking"; their minds must first be furnished with something to think about. But once they do so progress, the authors tell us, nowhere but in a college or university, where practicing scholars teach eagerly, can students achieve the one thing for which they should hunger most: intellectual formation and coherence. It's an old belief newly articulated, and the authors are their own best evidence for its truth.

—Tracy Lee Simmons

Political Will and Personal Belief: The Decline and Fall of Soviet Communism, by Paul Hollander (Yale, 356 pp., $35)

Paul Hollander, professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts, is an astute observer of the gap between ideological belief and reality. His 1981 *Political Pilgrims* surveyed the writings of Western intellectuals who visited socialist regimes in the USSR, China, and Cuba, and believed that they had seen the future. Now, in *Political Will and Personal Belief*, he examines the beliefs of those who were part of the socialist leadership in the USSR and its wholly owned subsidiaries.

The accounts of the exiled Victor Serge, defectors Victor Kravchenko and Arkady Shevchenko, and others provide fascinating autopsies of once-vibrant faith in the USSR and its Communist party. In the case of Shevchenko, the power and privileges afforded by the system, rather than its poor economic performance, gave way to doubts. The former Soviet leaders Hollander discusses are likewise candid. "The roots of the catastrophe lie in the ideology itself, in Leninism," says Gen. Dmitri Volkogonov, biographer of Stalin, Lenin, and Trotsky, who adds, "I was a Stalinist. I contributed to the strengthening of a system that I am now trying to dismantle." Says Valery Boldin, Gorbachev's chief of staff, "The term 'victory in the Cold War' is hardly strong enough to convey what really happened. It was a total rout of the USSR and the moral devastation of a once powerful adversary." Party intellectual Yuri Afanasyev, head of the Historical Archives Institute under Gorbachev, explains that his own doubts began in 1953, when he passed by an alley and heard drunks celebrating the death of Stalin.

Those drunks possessed more insight than the ideologically intoxicated Westerners who refused to connect the horrors of Soviet reality to socialism. The author helpfully includes collector's items from economist John Kenneth Galbraith and high-profile Soviet specialists Seweryn Bialer and Jerry Hough, who in 1991 said that economic reform in the USSR was going ahead with "amazing speed" and that Soviet political problems had been "grossly exaggerated."

The true moral equivalence, it emerges here, is between Western apologists and unrepentant Soviet Bloc apparatchiks such as Stasi boss Markus Wolf. "The capitalist system has no answers to the great problems," Wolf said in 1993. "I still believe in these ideas and I am sure they will come back." In many American universities they never left, making the works of Paul Hollander all the more deserving of careful study and wide exposure.

—Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Debaters: Getting It Straight

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 6

ONCE again, on the subject of abortion, the big players tended to miss the point. When that subject is raised in political circumstances raw fear abounds. Some voters are guided by strong emotions on the matter. This brings on circumspect language. Question to Dick Cheney at the debate: Do you want to restrict distribution of the abortion drug RU-486? Answer: "We want to look for ways to try to reduce the incidence of abortion in our society." That, he added, was also the aim of "many" on the other side.

The elementary question is: Why that aim? If abortion is okay, why should its use be reduced? Because it is dangerous? Not really: The figures show that clinically executed abortions are about as safe as surgery gets. Will the new pill bring dangers? Mr. Lieberman said that that was exactly the question the Food and Drug Administration had spent twelve years looking into, and the answer is: It's safe, provided this precaution and that supervision are undertaken.

Mr. Lieberman said that there *are* good programs out there that Gore/Lieberman support, "such as family planning and programs that encourage abstinence." Why encourage abstinence, if the abortionist is standing by? Merely to avoid expense? But in the welfarist scheme of things, the price of abortion ($300) is absorbable, and the bother of it is, as Mr. Lieberman stressed, the woman's responsibility entirely. About 30 percent of abortion-seeking mothers in France use RU-486, but the compound incidence of abortion is apparently not much changed after twelve years. What does it truly matter to the Life people if the pill, rather than the medical center, is used?

Sen. Lieberman wades into deeper water when he starts talking in the grand mode. Gore/Lieberman and Bush/Cheney have "dramatically different points of view" on the whole question. "We know that [taking the new pill] is a difficult personal, moral, medical issue, but that is exactly why it ought to be left under our law to a woman, her doctor, and her God."

The woman's doctor has the sole responsibility of advising the woman, and the woman is free to accept or reject that advice. But what does God have to do with it? If Mr. Lieberman thinks that abortion is wrong in the sense that killing is wrong, or Jim Crow is wrong, then God's voice, if not readily decipherable on the question, should certainly be sought out. To say that is a little different from saying: The woman who is careless in love is perhaps the least qualified to make moral judgments on the question: to abort, or not to abort. To abort is reasonably seen as simply the self-indulgent second act of an indulgent first act. An empirical case can persuasively be made that the woman carried away by passion and egged on by human stimulants—excitement, booze, deviltry—is charitably given a second chance, if we can simply ignore the question of a second life. But that woman's decision to abort should not be thought a subscription to America's central moral bank.

Mr. Cheney might have asked Mr. Lieberman why he and Gore are so jittery on the question. So what if *Roe* v. *Wade* were overturned? Half the states would instantly authorize abortions. In Connecticut, acting as they say proactively, contingent legislation is already on the books: If political authority returns to the states, the legislators voted two years ago, women are at liberty to abort in the state.

And now with the new pill, does it terribly much matter if one has to check in at a neighboring state to get an abortion? If *Roe* had been overturned last week, the New Hampshire woman might have needed to travel all the way to Connecticut to get an abortion. But with the pill at hand, such stresses would not be required. And nobody is proposing to uninvent the pill.

Ah, the call for crystalline language! There is the right not to choose to use it. That right is very widely exercised.

"'Love, honor, and obey'? I don't need this *kind of* pressure!"

Ensnaring the Mackerelsnappers

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 10

THE vote of American Catholics is hotly pursued. There is nothing among Catholics approaching the unity of Jews (Democratic), or blacks (ditto). Their fluidity (a slight majority went GOP for Reagan, and Democratic for Clinton in 1996) make them prime targets of political recruiters. The Bush campaign is, we learn, attempting to woo uncommitted Catholics. The big question now arises: How is this done?

One would assume that the anti-abortion plank of the GOP, inherited from non-Catholics Ronald Reagan and George Bush, would draw Catholic voters. The trouble here is that this is simply not self-evident. If the Church were to act against Catholics who voted for pro-abortion candidates, practically the whole of Massachusetts would be excommunicated. Indeed, within the Democratic party, the problem is for a pro-life candidate to wedge his foot in the door, as the late governor Robert Casey of Pennsylvania discovered when attempting to make a statement at the Democratic convention in 1992. To sway voters, the Catholic Church has to do other things.

Along come the Catholic bishops.

Joseph Califano, the prominent attorney and Democratic powerhouse, Cabinet Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under Jimmy Carter, relentless foe of any liberalization of drug laws, crops up in the current issue of *America* magazine, a publication sponsored by liberal Jesuits. Joe Califano is a very shrewd Democratic cookie. What he does is enumerate positions on a number of issues which have been cited by the bishops as responsibilities of dutiful Catholics. These positions have been advanced in "Faithful Citizenship," a pamphlet issued by the administrative board of the U.S. Catholic bishops. This pamphlet, one learns from Mr. Califano (not from our local priest), has been sent to 20,000 parishes "to encourage priests, liturgists, and parish councils to undertake activities to bring 'Catholic assets [to] the public square.'" Where Mr. Califano is decorously careful is in dealing with the church/state question. No religious

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group in America is supposed to argue in favor of any one political party. On the other hand, Mr. Califano correctly says, you cannot expect a religious association to decline to adopt a position merely because (like abortion) it is associated prominently with one political party. What Mr. Califano does is dance around that subject, because he wouldn't want to find himself on the other side from Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. So the net effect of his advice to American Catholics is: Wake up to your parishioners' moral obligations in respect of public policy. And if you don't know what these are, ask your nearest bishop.

Now here is Mr. Califano's transcription of the bishops' statement on civic responsibilities of Catholics:

—Health care is a fundamental human right. [The derivative question immediately arises: What does "fundamental" mean? Government-guaranteed?]

—Affordable housing is in the same category.

—The minimum wage should be "more than doubled."

—Everybody has an inalienable right to a quality education. [Even if you have to attend a non-public school to get it?]

—The death penalty should be abolished.

—Debt relief should be granted to poor nations. [That of course is another way of saying that aid should be given to poor nations.]

Now these are thoroughly defensible positions, but the question before the house is: Are they in any arresting way, *Catholic* positions? If the Catholic Church is going to get choosy about what constitutes tolerable political behavior, it would obviously begin by putting pressure on Catholics engaged in promoting the welfare of the Democratic party to rush forward to be shriven. Would they, traveling the road to penitence, bump into American Catholics who oppose a government-ordained rise in the minimum wage?

Where Do We Go From Here?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 13

THE visit paid to Temple Mount by General Sharon was widely interpreted as the flash point that brought on the apparent end of the peace process in the Middle East. Those who nurture isolationist fantasies should reflect on the repercussions.

—Palestinian "youth" were enraged and expressed themselves as youth do in that part of the world: They began to throw stones at Israelis. The Israelis counterattacked. Counterattacks are almost always more severe than what provoked them, understandably so. There is the further factor that the Israelis are a modern military force, the Palestinians much less than that.

—The prestige of the United States is immediately on the line, this because President Clinton was the godfather of the aborted Camp David meeting of three months ago. At that spectacular exchange, Prime Minister Barak of Israel offered what some people call 90 percent of the occupied territories. Arafat wanted 100 percent, plus sovereignty over East Jerusalem. Then after the post-Sharon explosions, Mr. Clinton offered to go to Cairo and sit down with Arafat and Barak and try to begin anew. That offer was spurned. The impact of the rejection is palpable. To say just that—No—to a proffered meeting with the President of the United States fires mutinous juices, and PanArabia lights up.

—A U.S. destroyer in Yemen is attacked by a suicide harbor boat, causing extensive damage. It is a terrorist's attack and speculation is reasonable that it is a thrust expressing reanimated anti-Americanism. Whether an expression of Saddam Hussein's cloistered malevolence, or an extension of the stone-throwing animus of the Palestinians, we do not know, and should not particularly care. The point is, *sumus Romani* isn't working. And the effect of it is that the day of the terrorist is renewed and every U.S. citizen in the area—and Yemen is about as far away as you can get from Jerusalem in the Arab world—is threatened.

—The Israel theater conflagration rises to a new intensity. It is pithily expressed by the two leaders. Barak says that the peace process is ended. Arafat says his people must renew their determination to recover their territories and establish their headquarters in Jerusalem.

—The price of oil shoots up by 8 percent. The market plunges by 379 points. There is commentary out there to the effect that the regional explosion could mean the end of the American boom, as consumers steel themselves for the austerities of high-cost oil.

—Our NATO partners survey the scene and, led by France, start asking themselves: Is America's backing of Israel not better seen, in the light of hardening developments and consolidated obduracies, as a sentimental anachronism? Yes, by all means, encourage the survival of Israel, but the costs of achieving that are too extravagant. France knows a great deal about appeasement. And Germany has no appetite whatever for antagonizing the sheikworld.

The scene intrudes directly on the American scene. A given—unchangeable, and under no pressure to change—is the commitment to Israeli independence. That means that no temporizing will be done by either of the two candidates. But other aspects of the disruption can have an effect. If the market's plunge foretells a strategic economic pessimism, evidence of that could be manifest before the election. Some speculate that this would play into the hands of the incumbent—don't mess with difficult situations in mid-crisis. More likely, this would translate into increased votes for Bush, on the grounds that, without having to opine on this Camp David or that Oslo or that Temple Mount, the diplomatic challenge for the superpower is to keep such things from happening, to the point of upsetting the whole bloody world and cutting the value of my market investment by 30 percent!!! Aaargh!!! Wouldn't Bush get the Aaargh vote?

What the president can't really do at this juncture is to allocate blame. There are those who say compellingly that we are heading for wartime because we did not enforce dove-time. Such analysts believe that those who wanted the peace process to work should have been ruthless about enforcing its specific terms and preempting provocations. The Palestinians, where possible, should have been restrained and punished—by the Palestinians. Gen. Sharon should have been told by Barak: Stay the hell away from Temple Mount for a month or two. The Hezbollah should have been publicly repudiated by Arafat for the desecration of Joseph's Tomb.

Persuasive injunctions, but not, at this point, very useful. When at the United Nations Security Council meeting one member argued that a litany of Israeli offenses should be accompanied by a litany of Palestinian offenses, the fruitlessness of that pursuit became evident. So that now, people are asking less, Who was primarily at fault? than, Where do we go from here?

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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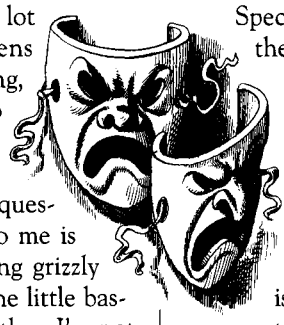
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

I HAVE frequently made tongue-in-cheek statements about repealing the Nineteenth Amendment. Now I say it again, but with a straightened-out tongue. The women's vote is making idiots of everybody and we'd be better off without it.

It's hard to pick a defining moment when all roads lead to Waterloo, but mine is probably the minivan commercial. It's been running over and over all summer; interestingly, on a lot of political shows. It opens with a chiding kid asking, "How far would you go to protect your children?" and then features more kids asking more chiding questions. The one that gets to me is "Would you face a charging grizzly bear?" I'd pour honey on the little bastard just to make sure, but then I'm not focus-groupable. The correct answer is an affirmative upward surge of the wriggling yellow line on pollster Frank Luntz's Female Emotion Machine.



This yellow line has replaced the fate line in our national palm, threatening to decide Election 2000 and those in the foreseeable future. It has been serpentining and corkscrewing its jaundiced path across our TV screens ever since the primaries, measuring the instinctive reactions and knee-jerk opinions of the soccer moms and their feminized mates that Luntz assembles for the edification of the candidates.

What the yellow line has writ, let no man put asunder. Not that any man would dare, least of all Frank Luntz, whose cherubic features fairly tremble with uncontainable joy as he explains its progress. See? It's dipping down to Gore's red line! But now look—it climbed suddenly up to Bush's blue line! [Clap hands and turn to camera in triumph.] Do you know what that means?

The slightest movement of the yellow line is enough to make weak men weaker. Did it go up at "community"? Shove that word into every speech as often as possible until the broads think you're going to put the superintendent of schools in charge of the army and navy. Did it take a sudden sharp plunge at "statesmanlike"? Get Dick Cheney a pet caterpillar and make him carry it around in a jar and sing to it at day-care centers. Did it stay steady on course in burrow-like contentment? W.'s incessant repetitions of "education" must be working, so make him pronounce it "ed-ju-kay-shun" to drag it out.

Special attention must be paid to the wavering yellow line that goes up, then down, and then up again. This is the silent visual version of a female voice saying, "I'm not mad, just hurt." It means that she liked what you said, but not the way you said it. The usual culprit here is an edgy distrust of declarative sentences, so train your candidate to insert an adverbial stool softener such as "sort of." Joe Lieberman used this to great soothing effect when he said, "This is a time to sort of knit the country together," about why he looked forward to meeting with Louis Farrakhan. The dropped stitch of "sort of" was so humanizing that the gals didn't even notice that he was talking about knitting with a monster. This statement was a twofer for Soft-Stool Joe because he also remembered that "look forward" is catnip: The yellow line goes straight to it.

It also goes straight to humor, provided it's the gentle, unthreatening kind of humor favored by the "healing power" crowd, who like to think you can laugh your cancer away. Say something with bite, however, and you will lose all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Yugoslavian election upheaval was a perfect cue for W. to announce that his favorite sandwich is Kostunica on rye, but the yellow line would have deep-sixed. I know because it happened to me on a daytime TV show during a book tour. The hostess was talking about the teeny-tiny stone in her engagement ring, and I said, "It must be a recondite." You just can't say things like this around conventional women. Even though they don't get it, they still know that *something* was said, and that's all it takes for them to conclude, "You're making fun of me." W. was wise to stick with peanut butter and jelly on white: It's been tested.

The yellow line is woman at war with herself and it was squiggling through our cultural life long before Luntz put it on a screen. One daffodil-bright manifestation of it affected my book-reviewing career. In the early '80s I got my first review assignment from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and before the year was out I had eight papers calling me regularly. What began as a sideline turned into a full-time job that kept me too busy to write another book of my own for four years. I found out why when one of the literary editors explained why he called me. "We'd like to have more women reviewers but a lot of them don't work out because they can't bring themselves to attack a bad book. They pull their punches and bend over backwards to say something nice. But you don't."

The pundits who gather nightly to analyze the wildly fluctuating polls can't afford to be that blunt, but they must be thinking the truth even if they don't dare speak it. If you want to know why Bush is three points ahead of Gore on Tuesday and Gore is three points ahead of Bush on Wednesday, listen:

"I'm not going. They'll be angry with me, but I don't care. I've made up my mind. On the other hand, if I don't go they might think I'm angry with them. Not that I care, but . . . Oh, I might as well go. The only thing is, they'll think I'm worried about what they'd think if I didn't. Why should I care? That settles it—I'm not going. My mind's made up."

The typical woman voter is convinced that she makes up her mind based on "the issues," but in truth her overriding concern is who is most "personable." She should reflect on Mme de Staël's assessment of kindhearted Louis XVI, the last king of France: "When the people feel the need for political reform, the private qualities of the monarch are scarcely sufficient to halt the force of that impulse."

And while she's at it, she should also reflect that history's foremost family man was Czar Nicholas II. **NR**

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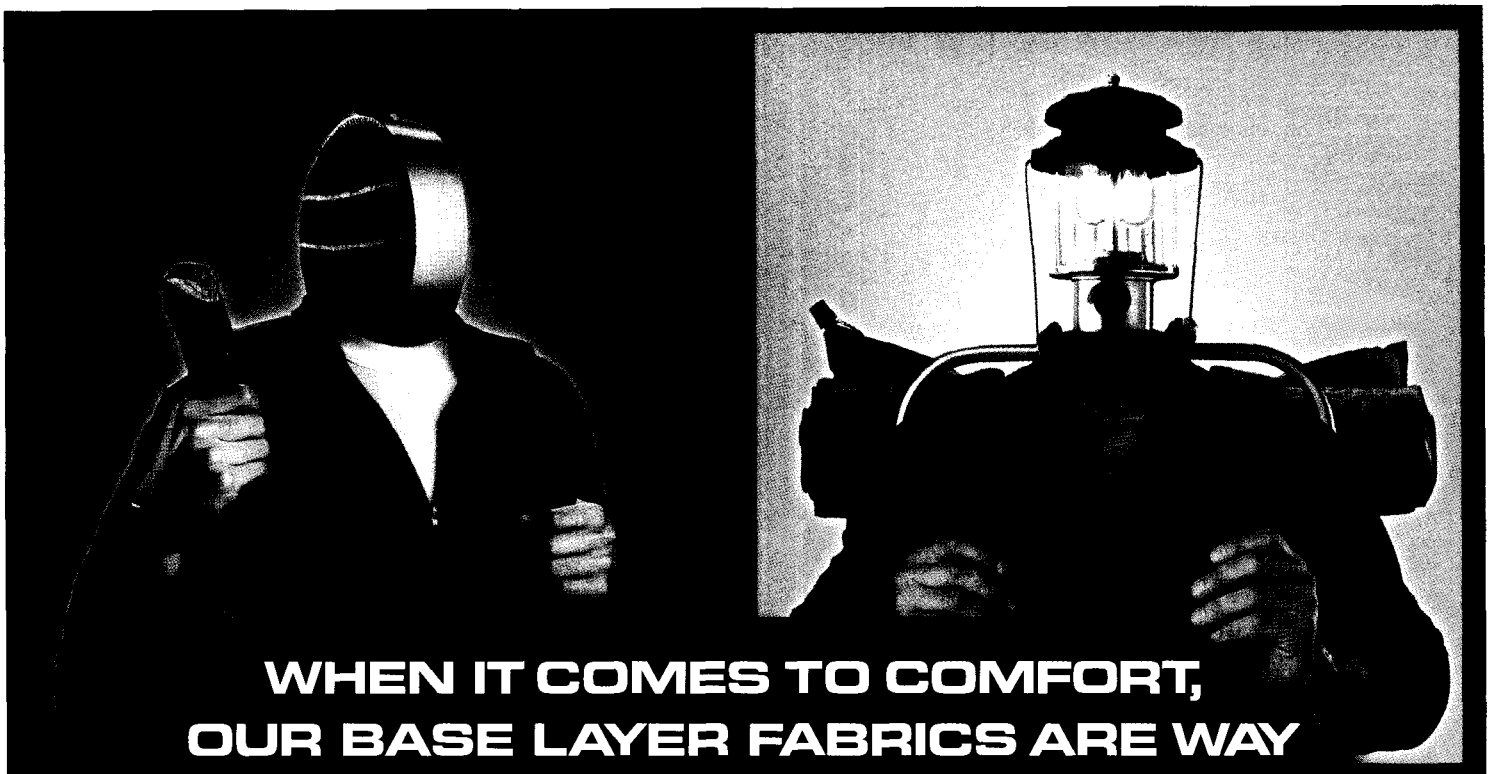

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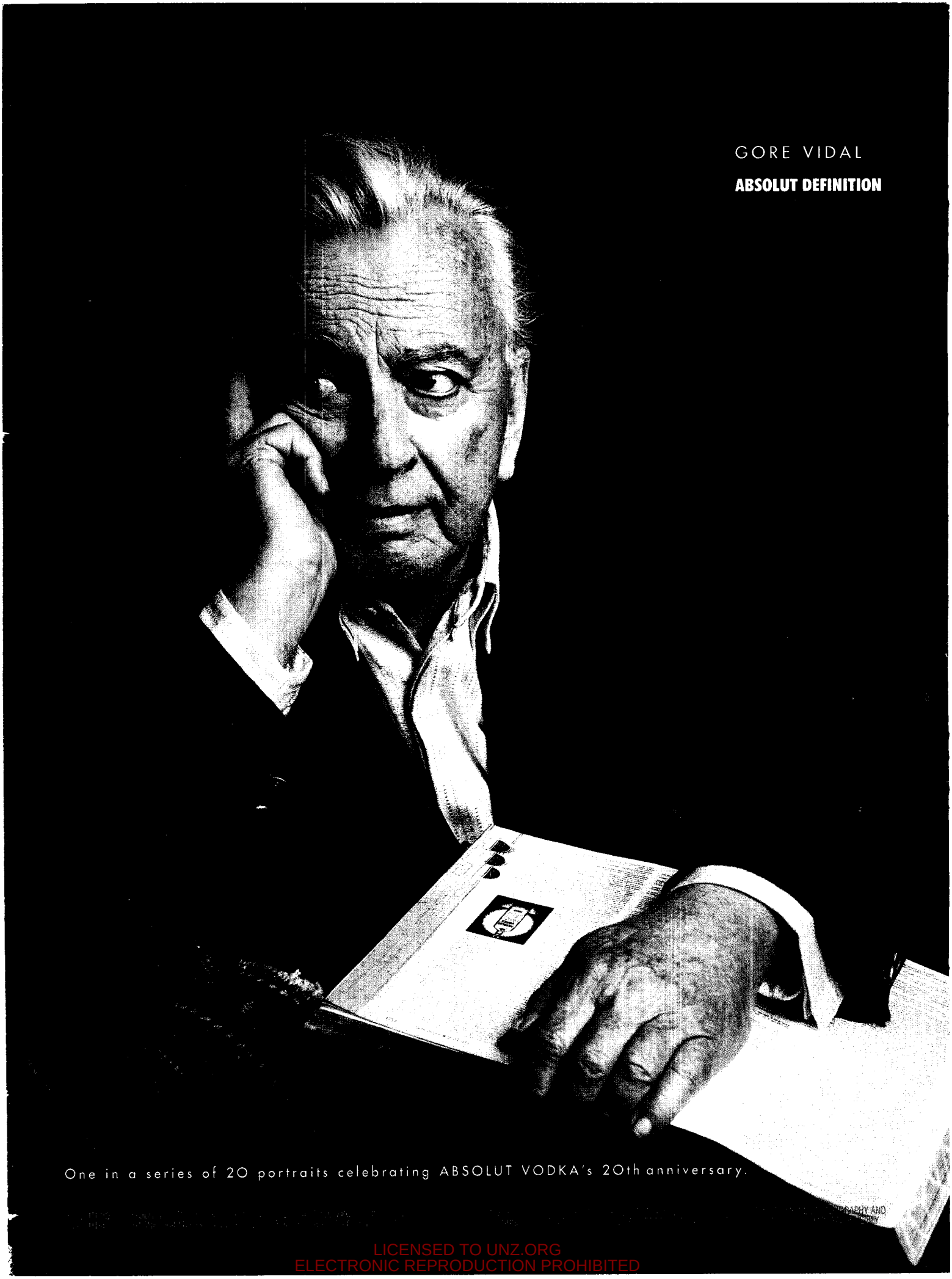

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